Sunday, July 6, 2008 • Vol. 23 / No. 212 website: www.inquirer.net

PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS

THE OBSCURE town of San Fernando in Siburan Island has been in the national eye the past two weeks. And what it is seeing, it likes a lot: seaside town with smooth, white sand backdropped by a mountain range rich in animal and plant species, sparkling clean rivers like the Cantingas river, which was voted second to Palawan's as RP's cleanest water. For Edita Rafol that means it's an easy catch of shrimps and small fish.

RP envoy charged in US

Employee accuses Baja, wife of trafficking, forced labor

By Miroslava Rocca
Correspondent

NEW YORK—AMBASSADOR Lauro Libcon Baja Jr., who headed the Philippine Mission to the United Nations from 2003 to 2007, is one of four defendants in a civil complaint alleging trafficking, forced labor, peonage and racketeering.

The case was filed on June 24 before Judge Victor Marrero of the New York Southern District Court. The co-accused are the ambassador's wife, Norma Castro Baja, his daughter, Maria Elizabeth Baja Noronde, and the Baja-owned Labaire International Travel Inc.

The complaint was filed by 39-year-old Maricha Suarez Bacosan through lawyers Aaron Mendelsohn of Troutman Sanders and Ivy G. Suriyopas of the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Ambassador Baja, 71, was also president of the UN Security Council in June 2004.

THE ACCUSED: Lauro L. Baja Jr., ex-envoy to the UN. REUTERS/FILE

He has retired and is now the foreign affairs consultant of Senate President Manuel Villar. Baja could not be reached for comment last night.

Bacosan, who holds a degree in nursing from the Unciano Colleges and General Hospital in the Philippines, said she arrived in the United States in January 2006 with a diplomatic "red" passport and visa, as a "personal employee" of Ambassador Baja.

She said she stayed at the five-story Philippine consular residence at 15 East 66th Street, New York—a townhouse where she was made to work 16 hours daily, seven days a week, in the Baja household.

Bacosan said she was paid only a total of $100 for three months of work, and another $300 for taking care of Fiscardo's son, who, she said, was allowed to hit her.

The townhouse—with a sizeable ballroom, hand-painted wallpaper, 19th-century Indian artworks and

RP ENVOY/A4

KIM CHIU adorns cover of Inquirer's first glossy for college women
The country's most popular 18-year-old has a daily schedule that could faze an adult, has the glamorous perks of celebrityhood that would be the envy of any woman.
CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

KIM CHIU

- **Thumbs up/down:** Tony Boy and Gretchen back in each other's arms—for now.
- Freddie Garcia, pillar of RP broadcast industry, discovers a new love SUNDAY LIFESTYLE

- **Why Lottermen** still pack the Big Dome
- Vicky Morales' greatest fear for her twin boys
ENTERTAINMENT

- **ABS-CBN** suspends Ces Drilon for 3 months
NEWS/ A2

- **Are we there** yet? Despite today's buffet of culinary schools, cooking shows, delicious chefs, Pinoy cuisine is still Asia's best kept secret. SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE

Imagine a world without Filipinos

By Abdullah Al-Maghlooth

MUHAMMAD AL-MAGHLOOTH BECAME handicapped and shut down his flower and gifts shop business in Jeddah after his Filipino workers insisted on leaving and returning home. He says: "When they left, I felt as if I had lost my arms. I was so sad that I lost my appetite."

Al-Maghlooth then flew to Manila to look for two other Filipino workers to replace the ones who had left. Previously, he had tried workers of different nationalities but they did not impress him. "There is no comparison between Fil-

IMAGINE/A6

Makati jeepneys go LPG for cheaper fuel, cleaner air

By Tessa R. Salazar

THEY SAW IT COMING.

Even before record-high oil prices prompted the government to aggressively promote the conversion of public utility jeepneys from diesel- to LPG-powered engines, some operators have already made the timely switch and are now leading the way for more converts.

One jeepney association in Quezon City began producing prototypes running on liquefied petroleum gas as far back as 2006, while another fleet owner based in Rizal made the same modification for one of his units last March.

And just two weeks ago, the Makati Jeepney Operators and Drivers Alliance Inc. (MJODA) formally announced its intention to convert at least 300 jeepneys to LPG.

LPG-run jeepneys have actually been around for some time, except that they never really made "road" headlines when they hit the road back then. MJODA founder Orlando Marquez noted last June 28, when his group signed an agreement with various LPG fuel and engine suppliers and service centers.

One of MJODA's partners, Ricardo David of David Motors, started studying LPG conversion as early as 2004. By 2006, even with diesel pump prices still relatively stable, he had already fitted three 18-seater jeepneys with engines that run on cheaper, cleaner fuel. He was then assisted in the shop by Koreans-trained mechanics.

"My target then was just to alleviate the air pollution caused by jeepneys," David said in Filipino. "When I visited

MAKATI/A4

Sick boy gets his wish—a police badge

By Alexis Papa

EXCEPT FOR A SLIGHTLY DISFIGURED left eye, there is no trace that five-year-old Carylle Josh Cervantes is fighting for his life.

Stricken with the rare blood disorder, Langerhans cell histiocytosis (LCH), it seems Carylle, has already gone through hell. But the boy wants to live a normal life if possible, his mother said.

In an interview with the Inquirer, his mother Mica said Carylle, nicknamed "Car-Car," insists on doing everything other children his age are doing, including going to nursery school and playing his favorite sport: basketball.

One day a few years ago as Carylle lay in a hospital bed ravaged by LCH, Mica asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up. "With a smile, he said he wanted to be a policeman. He is really fond of watching programs about policemen on TV and really admires lawmen," Mica said in Filipino.

Last Friday, Carylle got his wish and was given an honorary badge as a member of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

It started when PNP Chief Director General Avelino Razon marveled at Carylle's fighting spirit. "His will to live and to fight the disease is really admirable and should serve as an inspiration to us all."

When Razon found out about Carylle's situation, he immediately ordered a special release for the boy.

SICK BOY/A4

Tragedy uncovers Sibuyan 'treasures'

By Terra Quiremundo

SAN FERNANDO, SIBUYAN Island—In the shadow of the mystical Mt. Guiting-Guiting is "paradise"—wonders sufficient to grab the world's attention from the shipwreck off its pebbled shores.

Unknown to many and sidelined in the global hoo over the sinking of the MV Princess of the Stars, this town in Romblon is home to the crystal waters of the Cantingas River, the gushing Busay falls, the lush protected areas of the mountain (now a national park), and the tiny island of Cresta de Gallo with its white-sand beaches rivaling Boracay.

"It seems the only concern now is the ship," Mary Jane Arboleda, a professor at the Romblon State College, told the Inquirer.

"We have never experienced a typhoon like [Frank]. This is the first

TRAGEDY/A6

High fuel prices bring on better service

By Christian V. Esguerra

IF OIL PRICES ARE UP SO IS THE service at the neighborhood gas stations.

On that tantalizing observation of June 28 in Marabutuyong City, the gas boy beamed at driver Jun Lesaneta from ear to ear.

"How may I help you, sir?" he asked, inquiring also if the man behind the wheel preferred unleaded gas.

HIGH/A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, JULY 6, 2008

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Some Luzon and Mindanao rain showers; fair with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms elsewhere; slight to moderate winds from the east to southeast; slight to moderate seas; Manila Bay will be moderate to rough.

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Isabela/Cauayan	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Laoag	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Tuba	Partly cloudy
Aparri	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Partly cloudy
Cubi Point	Partly cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly cloudy
Iloilo	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly cloudy
Legaspi	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly cloudy
Catarman	Partly cloudy	Davao	Partly cloudy

Second

FRONTPAGE

E-mail: pi_news@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/frontpage

EZ2
22 26 | 3 2 8 | 6 1 4

SIX DIGIT
5 0 1 | 2 3 1

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6/42 LUZ2006/VIS-PHN
7 14 18 21 25 28
PHP 1,401,966.20

Ces Drilon slapped 3-mo suspension

ABS-CBN says she disobeyed orders, put lives of crew in danger

THE ABS-CBN TELEVISION NETWORK HAS slapped sanctions on senior reporter Ces Orella-Drilon for disobeying orders that resulted in her kidnapping and that of her camera crew in Sulu last month.

In a statement issued yesterday, the network said Drilon had been suspended for three months. Sonia Soto's decision at the time of the late evening newscast "Bandila" and from her duties as a senior correspondent.

According to the statement, Drilon was suspended "for disobeying orders not to go to Jolo, Sulu, where she and her cameramen Jimmy Encarnacion and Angelo Valderama were kidnapped by an armed group."

In her response to an internal memo issued against her, Drilon apologized to her superiors for disobeying their orders and to her cameramen for unwittingly endangering their lives.

"I respectfully accept the sanctions you deem proper to my disregard of your order. I cannot put two words how deeply I regret having put my team in danger ... and having caused anxiety and stress to the whole organization," Drilon wrote.

In a text message to the Inquirer, Drilon refused to elaborate on her response, saying that what she submitted to her superiors was "self-explanatory."

In an internal announcement addressed to ABS-CBN executives and employees, ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs head Maria Ressa stressed the need to hold Drilon "accountable for the grave consequences of her error in judgment."

The statement also noted that the ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs Standards and Ethics Manual stipulates: "While advocating the right of teamwork and deep trust that your journalists develop under life and death circumstances," Ressa wrote.

On June 8, Drilon and her team, together with professor Octavio Dinampo of Mindanao State University, were abducted by armed men believed to be members of the Abu Sayyaf in Indanan, Sulu.

On June 12, Valderama was released amid reports a P5-million ransom was paid. Drilon, Encarnacion and Dinampo were released on June 17 amid more reports a P10-million ransom was paid.

The Philippine National Police has filed before the Department of Justice charges of kidnapping for ransom against Indanan Mayor Munir Arbison Jr. and his son Hashir for the abduction.

The family had acted as negotiators for the abductors. They have denied any participation in the abduction of the ABS-CBN crew. Alexis Pope

Princess crew: There was calm, then nightmare began

By Jaymark Jiming

FOR 14 TO 20 MINUTES THAT ill-fated morning, the winds and waves suddenly receded, the sea became quiet and the air turned warm. Over 500 passengers on the MV Princess of the Stars heaved sighs of relief, believing the storm had succumbed to its onslaught.

In hindsight, the survivors doubted when they recalled those illusory moments: They were in the eye of the storm.

After the stillness at around 8:30 a.m., the sky turned dark and the nightmare began.

"Those morning, seven more, have occurred before a seven-star Board of Marine Inquiry yesterday the last few hours of the Princess of the Stars before it sank off Sibuyan Island in Sunday at the height of Typhoon "Frank." More than 500 passengers were on board.

Monsieur Cirino Nuñez Jr. and Esmeraldo Sun Jr. and third cook Reef Libut said the captain made the call to abandon ship at about noon.

The crewmen had been assigned posts in case of emergency. But the three said they were unable to reach their postings and deploy life rafts because the ship had tilted and sunk so fast

Thomasites root of RP-US friendship, says Kenney on July 4

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer N. Luzon

BAGUIO, 12/19—600 Ilocandos Kristo Kenney celebrated 112th Independence Day on July 4 meeting the 100-year-old Thomasites Camp here yesterday, remarking that the Thomasites were the roots of the enduring friendship between Filipinos and Americans.

"[The story of the Thomasites at Teachers Camp] is a wonderful beginning, and it's a tradition that continues today of American-Philippine friendship," he said.

The Thomasites were the pioneer American teachers who sailed in 1901 from San Francisco to the Philippines aboard the SS Thomas to set up the country's public school system.

"The Thomasites came ... at a time when travel was not the norm ... and they did not only teach [Filipinos] English ... they taught life skills, as well," Kenney said.

"Education bridges differences in cultures within our nations, because we represent two nations of great cultural diversity. Education is our past, our present and our future," he said.

Teachers Camp officials praised Kenney as a testament of the camp's history that one high school student wearing period costumes. The reenactment featured a scene where Filipino boys in T-shirts greet American schoolgirl.

July 4 is also Philippine-American Friendship Day. It may no longer be a public holiday, but this does not prevent the Department of Education from commemorating the annual event here.

Education Undersecretary Yolina Ledesma said every Filipino shared ties with Americans.

"Every Filipino can claim that he [or she] is a product of the Thomasites."

With reports from Gerry Esplanada and Elmer Ordóñez Sendiong, Inquirer N. Luzon

Sick boy gets his wish–a police badge

Front page A1

PNP Spokesperson Chief Supt. Eleazar Bartolome led the simple ceremony Friday afternoon for Carylle which included the awarding of a jacket with "Police" printed at the back and Carylle's last name on his right breast. On his left breast, Bartolome pinned a small police badge specially made for Carylle. A small contingent of police officers complete with a brass band were also on hand to assist their little fan.

Courage admired

"Carylle's strength is something we want to see in our policemen. To have the strength to go on performing our duties despite hardships," Bartolome said.

Langerhans cell histiocytosis is found in only around nine out of one million children below 15 years old. A histiocyte, or Langerhans cell, is a form of white blood cell that helps destroy foreign material in the blood stream and fight infections.

But children with the disease have too many histiocytes that accumulate in different organs. This condition can result in a host of symptoms that affect the entire organs.

These include multiple lesions, headaches, abdominal pain, jaundice, vomiting, weight loss, dehydration, chest pains, labored breathing and protrusion of the eyeball. It is treated with chemotherapy but is not considered a form of cancer. The disease is treatable but fatal in some cases.

Mica said Carylle's woes started when he was a year and three months old. They noticed a lesion near one of his ears and had it removed. Shortly after, doctors detected another lesion near the boy's left eyeball. Subsequent checks revealed that Carylle had LCH.

At first, Mica said she was surprised since her three other children, all girls, were healthy.

Carylle was brought to the hospital where according to the 39-year-old mother, Carylle's body was almost wasted by the disease. He could hardly eat and became frail and weak. He was stricken by high fever and frequent convulsions. It was at this point that Mica said she became fearful she would lose her third child.

"When he was in the hospital, I thought I would lose him. But I sensed that he was fighting. I could see it in his eyes. He was determined to fight with him," Mica told the Inquirer.

Dire straits

Mica's husband Carmelito is a carpenter for a chapel while she is a housewife. They live in a poor section in Pateros, Muntinlupa. Because of their financial position, Mica said they had to raise funds for Carylle's treatment.

"We have had to sell items that could be liberated on. We borrowed from a lot of people. Nagpakapal kami ng mukha, di na sana ang hiya. I had to do it for my boy, to save his life," she said.

Fortunately, the help came. "Kasi ding I pray to the Lord in thanksgiving. Akal He listened our prayers. When we really needed it, there were a lot of people who helped us," she said.

After 17 cycles of chemotherapy which started in September 2005, Carylle has regained some weight and is as sprightly and curious as any 5-year-old.

Healing

But Mica guessed doctors saying that Carylle is still afflicted with LCH and would still have to undergo chemotherapy sessions.

Mica said she and her husband are taking it day by day and trying to bring some normality to Carylle's life.

Much to the consternation of Mica, Carylle hates playing basketball with other kids in their neighborhood. "He is always on the basketball court and he gets really tired. But I can't stop him from playing because he seems to enjoy it."

Reviews of his school-going siblings, Carylle pestered his parents to attend school. "He also wants to do the things their boys are doing," Mica said.

Still, Mica also expressed fear that she might lose Carylle one day to the disease they are so bravely fighting.

"I really wish he would get well completely, or at least that his life is extended. That is my only prayer now," Mica said.

BITES OF THRILLS PNP spokesperson, Chief Supt. Eleazar Bartolome, heads the simple tribute to Carylle, which includes the awarding of a jacket with police and his name printed on it and the pinning of a miniature police badge.

A SALUTE TO COURAGE A small contingent of police officers came marching in with a brass band to honor their littlest fan.

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Imagine a world without . . .

Front page A1

ipino and others," he says. Whenever I see Filipinos working in the Kingdom, I wonder what our life would be without them.

Saudi Arabia has the largest number of Filipino workers—1,019,917—outside the Philippines. In 2006 alone, the Kingdom rewarded more than 120,000 workers from the Philippines and their numbers are still increasing. Filipinos not only play an important and effective role in the Kingdom, they also perform different jobs in countries across the world, including working as nurses. They are known for their professionalism and the quality of their work.

Nobody here can think of a life without Filipinos, who make up around 20 percent of the world's seafarers. There are 1.2 million Filipino sailors.

Disaster

So if Filipinos decided one day to stop working or go on strike for any reason, who would transport oil, food and heavy equipment across the world? We can only imagine the disaster that would happen.

What makes Filipinos unique is their ability to speak very good English and the technical training they receive in the early stages of their education. There are several specialized training institutes in the Philippines, including those specializing in engineering and road maintenance. This training background makes them highly competent in these vital areas.

When speaking about the Philippines, we should not forget Filipino nurses. They are among 23 percent of the world's total number of nurses. The Philippines is home to over 190 accredited nursing colleges and institutes, from which some 15,000 nurses graduate each year. Many of them work abroad in countries such as the US, the UK, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Singapore.

Surrounded by compatriots

Cathy Asis, a 29-year-old Filipino nurse who has been working in the Kingdom for the last five years and before that in Singapore, said she does not feel homesick abroad because "I am surrounded by my compatriots everywhere." Asis thinks that early warning allows Filipinos to excel in nursing and other vocations. She started learning this profession at the age of four as her mom, a nurse, used to take her to hospital and ask her (as with the words, "I used to kiss our observers I learned) a new thing. At the age of 11, I could do a lot. I began doing things like measuring my grandfather's blood pressure and giving my mother her insulin injections," she said.

This type of early education system is lacking in the Kingdom. Many of our children reach the university stage without learning anything except homework.

Learning from Filipinos

The Philippines, which you can barely see on the map, is a very effective country thanks to its people. It has the ability to influence the entire world economy.

We should pay respect to Filipino workers, not only by employing them but also by learning from their valuable experiences.

We should learn and educate our children on how to operate and maintain ships and oil tankers, as well as planning and nursing and how to achieve perfection in our work. This is a must so that we do not become like Muhammad Al-Mughirah who lost his interest and appetite when Filipino workers left his flower shop.

We have to remember that we are very much dependent on the Filipinos around us. We could die a slow death if they chose to leave us.

Reprinted with permission from Arab News, the first English daily newspaper in Saudi Arabia, which is published simultaneously in Jeddah, Riyadh and Dhahran. It was posted at the Arab News website on June 16 and has since become a popular topic in blogsites and forwarded e-mails. Permission to reprint was given by Arab News editor in chief Mr. Khaled Al-Maeena.

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- original and photocopies of the applicant's:
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  2. baptismal certificate
  3. for non-Catholics, a certification of affiliation to a religious group
- original and photocopies of parents' marriage certificate
- duly accomplished medical certification at the back of the application form upon admission

The Ateneo requires pre-test interview for applicants residing outside Metro Manila. Please contact the Grade School Admissions Office, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Telephone no.426-6001 local 7200 - 7205

Envoy: No crackdown on Pinoy illegals in EU

By Cynthia D. Balana

THERE WILL BE NO MASSIVE DEPORTATIONS against Filipinos and other migrants illegally living in European Union member-states under a new directive approved by the European Parliament.

The assurance was made by Ambassador Michiel MacDonald, head of delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines, as he refuted fears of a massive expulsion of illegal Filipino migrants from Europe.

The Return Directive, approved by the EP on June 18, lays down EU-wide rules and procedures on the return of illegal migrants, including provisions on voluntary return as well as expulsion, on detention if there is a risk of flight, as well as a number of important legal safeguards, together with provisions for legal aid. The rules are to be adopted in 2010.

"The directive does not in any sense call for the expulsion of illegal migrants, or any kind of crackdown," MacDonald stressed. "Instead, it says that if illegal migrants are to be expelled, this should be done according to certain minimum standards."

Application

MacDonald said the directive applied to third-country nationals staying illegally in the territory of an EU member-state, and did not apply to persons who were refused re-entrance on entry, or were subject to extradition procedures or criminal law sanctions.

Under the directive, an illegal migrant must be given a seven-days-to-one-month voluntary departure period. If he or she does not leave voluntarily, a removal order follows.

He said an illegal migrant could be detained for a maximum of six months (which can be extended to 18 months only in certain specific cases) if the judicial authority believes that the individual might abscond. But any detention decision must be approved by the courts, and that detention should be in special detention facilities and not in prisons.

Right of appeal

Also, the persons concerned shall have the right to appeal any return decision, and free legal assistance shall be granted to persons subject to return decisions.

In the case of children and families, MacDonald said the directive provides that they must not be subject to coercive measures and can only be held in detention as a last resort.

If a person leaves voluntarily, he or she may return legally thereafter, with no constraint. But if a person does not leave voluntarily he or she would be excluded from returning by five years, MacDonald said.

Asked if illegal migrants could regularize their illegal status, MacDonald said this was entirely a matter for the host government to decide, and was not affected by EU legislation.

Suspected human trafficker nabbed

AUTHORITIES HAVE ARRESTED A CHINA-born man suspected of being a courier for a human trafficking ring at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said Ji Meizhy a Singaporean, was apprehended by Bureau immigration officers-on-le who was about to board a Canada-bound flight with a Sri Lankan identified as Vijaya varma Sooriyaarachchi on June 27.

Libanan said Sooriyaarachchi was traveling on a tampered Singaporean passport, which identified the authorities. He also possessed a fake Singaporean identity card, airport investigators said when they found Sooriyaarachchi in a restroom on the arrivals area and tried to run away.

The two are being held at the immigration jail in Bicutan, Taguig City, while awaiting deportation hearing. They face expulsion and blacklisting from the country, Jerome L. Aliso

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, July 6, 2008
14th Saturday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Am 9:11-15

Thus says the Lord: In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, which is falling into ruin, and repair its breaches, raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that are called by my name. Thus says the Lord who will do this. Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, make gardens and eat their fruits. I will plant them upon their land, and they shall never again be plucked up out of the land I have given them, says the Lord your God.

2nd Reading: Rom 8:9, 11-13

Brothers and sisters: you, however, are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, because the Spirit of God is within you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, that one does not belong to him.

But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is within you, he who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies, through his Spirit dwelling within you.

Brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Gospel: Mt 11:25-30

At that occasion Jesus said, "I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to simple people. Yes, Father, this is what pleased you.

"Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you who are overburdened and weary, I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest. For my yoke is good and my burden is light."

Commentary:

What are these words of Jesus doing in our text, especially when we are going through difficult times. "Come to me," these words, especially when you are worried, weary, anxious or heavily burdened. "Come to me," Jesus says, and find the peace that this world cannot bring.

Jesus knows the difficulties that we face in life, and He stands ready to help us in these times of trial we find that the Lord keeps His promises, and that He never leaves His faithful ones disappointed.

Tragedy uncovers Sibuyan 'treasures'

First page A1

OCCUPATIONS on the island like a drift wood picker keeps most residents close to nature. Boulders abound all over town. Among the boulders, journalists from Manila find a delightful respite in the Pitinlan River in San Fernando. Beyond is the now familiar bow of the MV Princess of the Stars, which has become a symbol of a national tragedy. INQUIRER/JOEY

...ther we experienced this kind of disaster ... because this is paradise. We have many tourist spots, and we used to have many foreign visitors," she said. "Luxury liners used to dock close to the island, and they would come to see us and how we live, observe the culture."

Insulated

The town's resources, long the pride of the San Fernando folk, remain largely unexplored because the island is insulated by distance and the Sibuyan Sea.

But the need to develop the eco-tourist destinations again arose with the 1,000-strong fisherfolk population bereft of a means of livelihood because of the shipwreck and its dangerous cargo.

Town officials banned all fishing, diving and swimming in the Sibuyan Sea last week, after transportation officials recommend the presence of a consistent rate of the toxic pesticide endosulfan in the waters' ecosystem.

Authorities fear leakage. Mercifully, Sibuyan's waters have tested negative of contamination since last week.

But as a result of the ban, the entire town is now dependent on relief packs of rice and canned goods from national and nongovernmental agencies.

'All this beauty'

"We have all this beauty but we need the help of national agencies to develop infrastructure and facilities," San Fernando Mayor Susette Tantiangco said.

"We have tourist spots, but tourists find it hard to come here because of the problem of accessibility. In rainy days, trips here are not regular, and the boats leave only at certain times.

"And with the roads alone we have a problem because only 18 percent of the circumferential roads are paved. There is that persistent fear we are feeling a hype as package for place because we lack the infrastructure."

The mayor said she had presented her town's tourism potential to national government agencies. But development has yet to come San Fernando's way.

She expressed hope that President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent promise of developing the town's road network would be the start of finally realizing this goal.

Getting there

To get to San Fernando from Manila, one takes a flight to neighboring Tablas Island and then a boat ride of roughly three hours to Sibuyan Island. The boats set sail only in the day, and with the weather and waves permitting.

Or one takes a ship from the Batangas port to San Fernando's neighboring Magdiwang town, a ride of roughly 14 hours that also goes around seven to Tablas before docking at Sibuyan.

From the Magdiwang port town, jeepney ferry passengers to a two-hour commute to San Fernando.

Once there, one reaches a circle and then hits the rough road to the foot of Goth-ing-Darting, which arches northeast through San Fernando's sprawled town along campgrounds and into the Sibuyan Sea.

Signaled to be among the country's cleanest, the Carmiguan River in Barcelon, the barangay nearest the shipwreck, is accessible by a paved path from the main road.

Sweet water

Often empty, a corrugal house by the river served as home to Coast Guard officers who stayed in some last week to conduct search, rescue and recovery operations at the shipwreck.

Further down the main road, a waterfall that locals tag as "Pitinlan" for a place to hold a picnic) draws from Gothing-Darting near the Carmiguan River.

Pitinlan, which one reaches after a hike of roughly 15 minutes through narrow mud paths and slippery boulders from Sitio Cabitungahan, provides fresh water that locals find fit to drink.

"The water there is sweet. Its even safe to us shower for our drinks," quipped a villager.

Some 2.5 meters from the town center, the Busay Falls showers cool water into a natural pool in Barangay Panangahan.

According to Tantiangco, the town chairwoman to see and save is no danger of contamination even if toxic chemicals leak into Sibuyan waters.

Some 45 minutes from the island is Cresta de Gallo, a 3-hectare "virgin islet" surrounded by transparent blue waters and coral reefs.

"It's a great diving spot," said Tantiangco. "You can circle the shoreline in 30 minutes. It's like Boracay ... [except that] it doesn't have facilities, not even fresh water."

Sea-toothed ridges

Trailing Gothing (or "GT") is thus called because of its "sea-toothed" ridges.

Its steep slopes and vertical rock walls continue to challenge even the experienced mountaineers, who request it as one of the "most difficult climbs" in the country, along with the jagged-edged Halcon (in Oriental Mindoro) and Mantinggian (in Palawan).

GT is also known for its rich biodiversity, and studies on the local wildlife—the Sibuyan Sibuyan and Lesser Sibuyan flower color, the Sibuyan giant mono mouse, the Sibuyan pygmy fruit bat and the Sibuyan striped mouse rat—found on no other mountain.

The rare Philippine tube-nosed fruit and Philippine hawk eagle are also among the mountain's inhabitants, thriving in a lush forest cover with a variety of endemic fauna.

Enchanted

San Fernando's nature spots are a staple in the townsfolk's conversations with visitors. And the chit-chat always comes with a warning.

"This is an enchanted place," Abraham Rafol, a longtime resident and teacher at the local town college, told the Inquirer.

"If you notice, there's no nightlife here and there are no bars. Those who dared put up one lost their business because the mountain's spirits do not like that," she said.

According to Rafol, there was once a church, bar, restaurant in Carmiguan but the river swallowed it whole.

Then there was a visitor who went for a swim in Carmiguan and later insisted that he had met a woman in white—someone that none of his companions saw.

The townsfolk also spoke of hunting the mountain sly and well as visiting explorers drilled into rock walls in search of nickel, and of the mountain bleeding rocks once a chill struck its face.

Golden ship

And talking about another mystical promise, the locals told stories of the "MV Sibuyan," a purported golden ship that would chase itself to a vessel to trouble at sea and guide it to safe shelter.

"Sailors think it's a real ship on its way to a safe dock. They do not know that the ship goes straight to Carmiguan; that's why many ships are spotted here," Rafol said.

The way the townsfolk tell it, the mysterious ... mystical dwellers only select rogues and cats from visitors.

Kim Chiu adorns cover of Inquirer's first glossy for college women

First page A1

Its launch this glitz is the dream of a typical teen: To get an education, preferably a business education.

"I don't know anything at all about running a business. I just like to learn," Kim Chiu told YOU magazine.

A hip and stylish Chiu, the teen icon of Philippine teleserela and reality TV is the cover of the maiden issue of YOU magazine targeted at college women.

Cover girl Kim Chiu talks about her life, passions, learnings and style. In Get Her Style, YOU dissects the style of this young lady who got more than 600,000 audience votes in a reality TV show.

YOU is the latest glossy of Hinge Inquirer Publications, under the Inquirer Group.

It is also the Inquirer's first thrust in the glossy magazine women's market.

"It fits the Inquirer Group's thrust of enabling the Filipino to embrace aspects and stages of his and her life, and on various media platforms. With YOU magazine, we are connecting to the 16-year-old-to-30s market which is most dynamic, interesting and significant demographic," said Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez, president of Philippine Daily Inquirer and chair of the board of Hinge Inquirer.

YOU reaches the college market through that market's main forms of self-expression, music and fashion.

YOU also has the functional idols of the singing UMP and NCAA basketball sensation—Chris Tiu, James Martinez, Joshua Webb, among others. There are also exclusive interviews with Takas by Gen, Sam Bonifacio, fitnessgurus and more.

Lucky readers of the maiden issue can also win prizes, including cool Nokia Watches, Tokidoki Hello Kitty and concert tickets to Libertines. Copies of YOU, for only P45 each, are now out in bookstores and magazine stores.

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FREEDOM WARRIORS

Old freedom fighters never die, they just re-tie boots like former Vice President Teofisto Guingona who autographs his book "Fight for the Filipino" for Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo during its launch at the Manila Hotel on Friday.

DepEd project would urge pupils to value 'lowly' coins

FOR STUDENTS TO develop the habit of **valuing coins**, the Department of Education and Culture has relaunched the "Bilang Buto para sa Edukasyon" project.

"It's only appropriate our schools observe the habit of giving value specially to the low-denomination coins," said **Education Secretary** Jesli Lapus in a statement on Friday.

He said that when the program was first launched last year, a total of P6,058,540.55 was **generated.**

The project is a joint coin redemption campaign of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and the DepEd.

Owing to the amount of coins collected last year, the BSP was able to save P8.2 million in minting costs, Lapus said.

The amount in turn was used by the BSP to buy 8.6 computers for the DepEd to distribute to schools in the provinces.

With last year's success, Lapus said the project goal this year was bigger at P15.5 million.

Students can drop their coins in piggy banks to be placed **inside** their school.

Lapus said the project also aims to increase savings, especially among "small" savers who include public-school students and students, Nancy Carvajal

UP prof top Asean scientist

PHYSICS PROFESsor Dr. Caesar Saloma, dean of the UP College of Science, is this year's Sonic/Onwording Scientist (ASOS) awardee.

The triennial award is conferred on scientists and technologists from **Asean countries** whose achievements in science and technology have been internationally recognized. The award will be conferred on Saloma on July 7 during the celebration of the 5th Asean Science and Technology **Week in Manila.**

Saloma is being recognized for his **contributions** in photonics and signal processing, in collaboration with colleagues and students at the Institute of Physics.

His efforts have resulted in the development of novel and cost-effective instrumentation in optical signal processing and retrieval and his findings have been published in international journals on optics and applied physics.

Saloma was the only Asean scientist to receive the Outstanding Young Scientist award in optics in 2005. He has been a member of the National Academy of Science and Technology since 2005 and is one of a select group to hold the rank of UP Scientist III.

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High fuel prices bring on better service

From page A1

He cleaned the windshield, checked the oil and water levels, and probably would have given Lourdes's 1.6-liter Optra sedan a dust off if requested.

When everything was said and done, he assured us Lourdes and said he hoped to see the driver again soon.

Lourdes, 36, paid around P60 more for the same 20 liters of gas he had purchased a few days ago. The night before, for the 14th time this year, oil companies had again raised pump prices by P1.50 a liter.

(At 12:01 a.m. yesterday, oil firms again raised their prices by P2 a liter for diesel and kerosene and P1 a liter for gasoline. It was the 16th time pump prices were raised this year.)

'Intangibles'

So customer service is good. But hard-up motorists still need cheap gas.

"To me, it's negligible," Lourdes said of the business in reference to the "extra" courtesy that gas stations are extending to the likes of economics cuts.

"I still feel that oil companies are not appreciating their perks enough to cushion the impact of oil price increases in the world market. They are simply passing the bulk to consumers," he said.

A gas boy at a Valenzuela City station admitted that good customer service was among the "intangibles" that his company's now employing to somehow ease the burden of motorists.

Asking to be identified only as Elmer, he said it was still better to have a pleasant face attending to an inhaled driver even if the bottom line remained the same—oil prices constantly increasing, with no end in sight.

"We were instructed to be always courteous with our customers," Elmer said in Filipino. "We're being monitored, and we can be suspended for not following this courtesy policy."

Plain problem

But Lourdes, a mid-level call center executive, pointed out that motorists spent only around five minutes at a gas station and, therefore, hardly benefited from smiling attendants.

The main problem is still the exorbitant price of oil products," he insisted.

And he said he could see imagine how low-income Filipinos were coping with the crisis.

As though to soften the continuing blows, one gas company has introduced prepaid cards that fix prices to at least P53 a liter. Others are offering fuel rebates through credit cards.

For all that, the continuous increase in gas prices has seriously dented Lourdes's wallet. He takes home P25,000 a month but spends around P9,000 of that on gas.

Lourdes said he was dealing with the problem by now taking public transport in moving around Metro Manila.

"Or if I decide to bring my car, I usually just travel from one point to another. If I need to go somewhere else, I just leave the car in one place to fill myself on gas," he said.

Even Lourdes's coffee habit has been affected. So longer does he go to Starbucks every day. Brewing his trusted genuine in the expensive beans is only once a week.

WITH GAS PRICES LIKE THESE, jeepneys powered by LPG have become more viable. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

CURTAIN CALL Inquirer president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, Ballet Manila's Lisa Macuja, and Inquirer assistant vice president for classified ads Jessie Relucallon share a light moment at the signing of a memorandum of agreement on PEN-Inkmarker's sponsorship of Ballet Manila productions for the 2008 season. JOVEN CRUZ

RP envoy charged in US

From page A1

county European furniture and carpets—were known as Imelda Marcos' New York residence during the musical ends of late late husband, Ferdinand Marcos.

Curiously, the two upper floors serve as the consul general's residence, while the three lower floors are reserved for the head of the Philippine Mission to the UN.

Original agreement

In her complaint, Basuman said she slept in the limousine, using a chauffeur against the cold.

She said she had to accompany Norma Baja grocery-shopping wearing only her summer clothes and sandals even though it was winter.

She claimed that she was verbally abused when she ordered almost her original agreement with Norma Baja.

This original agreement purported by included transportation to the United States, a visa, work authorization and help in finding a nursing job.

Norma Baja purportedly made the offer to Basuman at the Lahaina Intercontinental Hotel-Beach Resort in Maui, which the latter was taken by a hostess "Esther" Magdalang.

The package deal price was P500,000, Basuman said.

She said that when she was unable to meet that price, Norma Baja reduced it to P350,000.

Basuman said she made the payment in three installments, from November 2005 to January 2006.

She said the first installment was handed to Norma Baja and the last two to Lahaina Intercontinental Hotel.

Domestic helper

Basuman said that in December 2005, Norma Baja took her regular "passport and accompanied her to the Department of Foreign Affairs to apply for a new diplomatic "red" passport as Ambassador Baja's "personal employee."

She said she was made to sign a contract that she was not allowed to read, and was instructed by Norma Baja to tell the DFA that she was to be a domestic helper for the Baja household.

But once in New York, Basuman said, she was told by Norma Baja that she would have to work for six months as the Bajas' domestic helper to make up the rest of the package deal cost.

The hostess in Manila tried to seek comment from DFA spokesperson Elaine Cristobal, but text messages and calls to his phone were unanswered.

Rico Act

Basuman's lawsuit cited 15 counts of actions ranging from forced labor, trafficking, slavery, peonage and indentureding.

It also invoked the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (Rico) Act, which, under Section 1964(c), allows civil claims to be brought by any person injured in his/her business or property by reason of a Rico violations.

A person who succeeds in establishing a civil Rico claim will receive up to three times the amount of actual damages for each cause of action. Basuman's complaint cited two counts under Rico.

But before Rico can be invoked, the complainant must prove the existence of a "criminal conspiracy." Basuman claimed in her complaint that all four defendants not only constituted an "association in fact" but also had "an ongoing business relationship" with Magdalang.

Magdalang, according to Basuman's complaint, received commissions from Baja and Lahaina "for recruiting Filipinos willing to pay a fee to travel to the United States."

The complaint also named nine other Filipino women who had worked in the ambassador's household.

No surprise

It could not be confirmed whether the DFA pays for the domestic staffing of the four OFW consular residences.

The issue did not surprise some Filipinos in New York.

"All of us know of one or two with supposed connection, and half a million pesos is the going price," said Bautista, who refused to give his last name.

"I paid that much," he said. "But the deal does not include being thrown or enslaved. Magbayad ka na, babayaran ko po (You paid up, but you're still abused)! That's putting salt on your wounds."

Only last year, the mother-in-law of Vice Consul Anthony Mandap of the Philippine Consulate in San Francisco pleaded guilty to exploiting Irene Gado and agreed to pay her $78,000 in back wages.

According to court records, Gado, barely in her 20s, travelled to the United States in 2003 to work as a nanny in Mandap's house in San Francisco. She was promised $8 an hour for a 40-hour workweek and $12 an hour for overtime.

But upon her arrival in California, Gado was told that she was needed by Mandap's in-laws in New Jersey. She subsequently provided continuous care to Mandap's incapacitated father-in-law, cleaned the house, cooked all meals, provided manicures and pedicures to the family's friends, and was paid only a fraction of what she was promised.

(Oliver-Mike Bunoz is a Filipino journalist living in New York.)

Makati jeepneys go LPG for cheaper fuel, cleaner air

From page A1

Japan in 1990, the taxis there were already running on LPG."

"If the prices of gasoline and diesel didn't go up this much, I doubt if LPG jeepneys would get this much attention," he said.

Marquez said Isuzu's pioneering effort deserves praise not only in view of today's soaring oil prices but also for its environmental benefits. Jeepneys—currently numbering 255,000 nationwide—remain the biggest oil consumer and source of air pollution in the land transport sector, he noted.

"I told President [Macapagal-Arroyo] in a meeting in 2007 that while taxes paid by the tremendous cacapon groups have been used by the government to buy medicines for people who had fallen ill because of air pollution, the government had not paid attention to the source of the problem—the jeepneys," Marquez recalled.

Switching to LPG

"There [that we must choose six, not nine diesel engines no longer pass Consumer standards set by] the Clean Air Act, and behind new diesel engines have become expensive," said another transport sector leader Boy Vargas on why he, too, switched to LPG in March 2008.

Since they use no cleaner fuel, LPG jeepneys are unlikely to be targeted by "tuck-smoke belching" operatives, added Vargas, assistant president of 1-UTAK, an umbrella group of jeepney organizations that include Marquez's MODA, among others.

He currently owns a three-month-old LPG jeepney plying the Cubao-Angono line. With it, his driver could earn up to P700 a day. He makes only P200 if he would stick to a conventional, diesel-run unit plying the same route.

Daniel said his 2006 passenger unit ran on diesel that cost around P1,500 daily "didn't click with operators." He finally secured parts for those models only this year.

Trial run

Some of his LPG jeepneys have been on a "trial run" for three months now in Barong Hizal, Sta. Ursa, Laguna; Baliwag, Bulacan; and Quezon City Citing feedback from the drivers, David said their daily fuel expenses have been "16 percent" less than that incurred by drivers of diesel-run jeepneys.

David's company produces an LPG-powered jeepney at P450,000 per unit. The engine alone runs at least P150,000 and is supplied by the Japan-based SGOs Environmental Foundation.

Vargas procured his LPG engine from another supplier at about the same price.

P1-B loan

To fund the conversion of 200 jeepneys under MODA, Marquez said his group plans to avail itself of the P1-billion loan package announced by the government last month. Vehicles with aging, smoke-belching diesel engines will be prioritized, he said.

For the conversion program, MODA signed last June 26 a memorandum of agreement with Social Mercury, Better Alternative Auto LPG Center, Liquigas Philippines Corp., and Philtranc Industries Inc.

The hotpoints was able to "test-drive" an LPG jeepney at David's shop in Bulihanwak, Quezon City. On the outside, the body looked no different from that of a regular jeepney.

Except for the engine label displayed on the hood and a switch near the steering wheel, there were no other visible distinguishing marks. The LPG tank was installed under the chassis.

Engine noise was lower compared to that of diesel-run units. And instead of black smoke, "smoke" would come out of the exhaust pipe, David pointed out.

A typical 2.0-liter LPG engine is deemed advisable for 16- to 20-seater jeepneys; a 2.7-liter engine for 20- to 26-seater models, while 3.0- and 3.3-liter engines are best for 26- to 28-seaters, are considered "jumbos," he added.

CONVERSION The erstwhile "Kings of the Road" are leaning to the reality on the ground. On June 28, a memorandum of agreement was signed for 200 Makati jeepneys to switch to LPG per unit LPG. At the signing are: from left Emmanuel Amoza, president/CEO Philippines LPG Bus & Tec Co. Inc.; Ricardo David, vice president/treasurer, Daniel Motors and Marketing Corp. and Gonzalo Carlo, president, Makati Jeepney Operator Driver's Association. ROSS ALVAREZ

Honor grads inspire young achievers in Read-Along

By Kaye V. Pedrosa

THREE SUMMA CUM LAUDE graduates of the University of the Philippines talked about the importance of dreaming and the values of hard work, perseverance, discipline and, above all, prayer at yesterday's Inquirer Read-Along session for high-achieving kids.

Former Balikbayan Philippine-Universe team Theresa Licaros, who graduated summa cum laude with a degree in Broadcast Communication in 2003, read Admiral Hoane's "Lola Pedi" by Russell Molina.

Mikaela Fudolig, who graduated summa cum laude at the age of 16 last year with a degree in Physics, encouraged the children to read along with her Inquirer Lour's "The Owl and the Pussycat."

Schoolboy from province

Former Inquirer reporter Edson Tandoc, who graduated in 2003 with a degree in Journalism as UP College of Mass Communication's first summa cum laude, related his experiences as a schoolboy from the province and how he was able to achieve his dreams.

Yesterday's Read-Along was for beneficiaries of the Hands on Schools (HOS)-Linking Wit Kid! program, a mentoring program for high-achievers in Metro Manila.

Participants were Grade 4 and 5 pupils from Nuevo de Dehesa School, Plainview Elementary School and Pembo Elementary School.

"All of you are here because you are considered high-achievers," Quezon Metropolis, HOS chair, told the children. "In the next years, who among you will be future summa cum laude?"

Math problems

"The kids were really good," said Licaros, whose story "Lola Pedi" had math problems interspersed into the plot. "They're not just smart, they're also quick in math."

"When I learned that they were underprivileged, I was even more amazed because they showed that it didn't matter. They exude confidence, and they are eager to learn—that's what's important," said Tandoc.

Value of patience

Fudolig emphasized the value of patience. "Sometimes you can't have everything right away. Some things cannot be rushed. But even then, don't lose sight of your goal. You still have to keep working hard."

Tandoc, for his part, told of how being from the provinces did not stop him from dreaming that one day he would enter UP, the country's premier state university.

"When I was there (at UP), I managed to become an Ayonon scholar, and eventually, I also worked for the Inquirer. After that, I wanted to study in Singapore, and I managed to get a scholarship," he said.

"Imagine, from a place called Tapaz in Pangasinan, that you didn't even know how to locate on the map, I was able to do all those things. And if I can do it, so can you."

'Enjoy school'

"You have to remember how lucky you are. You have to believe in yourself and most importantly ... you have to enjoy school, every lesson," he said.

"And above all, say a prayer. Do not receive of dreaming," he added.

Susana Acosta, principal of Nuevo de Dehesa, described her students' experience as "amazing."

"The parents were proud; my students can really look up to," she said.

Love your elders

Nine-year-old Lois Mata, a Grade 3 student at Nuevo de Dehesa, said she liked Licaros' story because it taught her to love her elders, especially her lola. "I also learned from Tandoc that no matter where you come from, you can always dream."

"I learned that you really have to study well to reach your dreams," said Christienne Salangsang, a Grade 4 student also at Nuevo de Dehesa.

Adrienne Joy Montero, 10, of Plainview Elementary School, was very happy to get her hair on the bonuses. "I want to be a journalist someday and writing for the bonuses is one of my dreams," she said.

Dreams come true

"I was also inspired by Kaya Edson's story. It taught me that dreams do come true," she added.

Yesterday's session was in cooperation with Hands on Manila, Parol Foundation Inc. School, Tanyag Philippines, Jollibee, Lelavon Farms, Tarsis and Chinese, and Krispy Kreme. Books from Adarna House were given out.

The next Read-Along session will be on July 12 with Angelique Veloso of Gats' Builds and Alive Awards Best Child Performer Miguel Aguilos as guest readers.

Interested participants may contact Ellen Capestros at Cielo Buñan at tel. 4978906, local 320. Those who are interested in being a patron in the program may send an e-mail to inqurfoundation@inquirer.com.ph. With Jehezkiel Quodala, Inquirer Research

MIKAELA FUDOLIG, who at 16 graduated summa cum laude from UP, answers questions from an equally high-achieving audience at the Inquirer Read-Along session.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 23 No. 213

OPINION

Nobodies

LOSERS AND RECYCLED NOBODIES. THESE ARE the best that President Macapagal-Arroyo has to offer the country in staff for her administration. Neno fiddled while Rome burned; Caligula tried to make a senator out of a horse; the President combines Neno and Caligula by rolling out the red carpet for Vicente Sotto III, Michael Defensor, Prospero Pichay, Ralph Recto and Teresita Deles.

EDITORIAL The most recent appointment that comes with Cabinet rank is that of Sotto as chief of the Dangerous Drugs Board. He claims he's qualified because he sponsored the law that created the office he now heads. That may be so, but it was his failed bid for elected office that put him on the shelf in the position—as a reward for joining the President's side. Sotto's recycling is a clear case of the unelectable being given a portfolio by the "un-lihed." And he may be the first in an unsurprising line of returning has-beens.

Defensor, for example, was prominently put on display during the President's early morning arrival (from her visit to the United States) and inspection of the Nida 3. Pichay, Recto and Deles have been nominated by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita as "probable" additions to the Cabinet.

The ongoing Cabinet composting is being accompanied by underwhelming appointments to constitutional commissions. The most recent ones—Lucenito Tagle and Leonardo Leonida (Commission on Elections)—have lashed out at unimpressed observers, saying they should be given time to prove themselves independent. The problem is that the popular consensus is that the country doesn't have the luxury of time.

The Comelec of today makes the Comelec of the martial law years look like a paragon of efficiency and probity, don't why the generally unimpeachable appointments of Chairman Jose Melo required a supplement of impressive new commissioners. Instead, the President chose to make appointments that merely prolong the Comelec's profession. If the probation fails to meet public expectations, what does? Restoring the credibility of our elections is one urgent undertaking in which failure shouldn't be an option.

The best that the President's people can say to justify the appointments is that they are within her prerogative. That sounds like the crude American joke that goes: Why does a dog lick its private parts? Because it can.

No one doubts the prerogatives of our presidents, but one measure of a chief executive is the manner by which he/she exercises presidential prerogatives. The President has the prerogative—because it is not prohibited but merely limited by law (for a period of one year from the date prospective appointees lost an election)—to hand out patrolillos to any of her failed candidates. She has the prerogative to staff reform in the Comelec by installing obscure individuals who have to earn public trust, instead of being able to bank on a reservoir of goodwill that enables them to accelerate change in the electoral commissions. She has the prerogative, in a word, to sacrifice meritocracy to the altar of partisan politics.

This is rare the behavior of a President in a legacy mode, of a leader preparing to leave a solid legacy of good governance behind. This is the behavior of a President preparing to embark, next move, on a make-or-break campaign. Building up a massive administration war chest is, of course, necessary if the administration coalition is to survive past 2010. But no result will be humanly sweet that investing in the administration's future can only be done at the public's expense; it limits what can be spent for the public's pension.

Make no mistake: each new Cabinet appointment carries with it a corresponding reshuffle in the executive agency concerned, as the new appointee brings in a new team. This means we can all look forward to a period of renewed instability in overstretched, under-funded, already unpopular executive agencies. These officers will find themselves only able to respond in new challenges sluggishly, as their staffers adjust to new management. The supposed benefits, then, of what will be the second-longest administration in our history come October next year, are certainly none. For we are merely witnessing the latest upheaval in an administration more obsessed with reinventing itself than actually instituting a stable—because long-lived—policy environment.

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'Bayan Ko'

SEPARATE OPINION

Ruggero A. Cruz

I HEARD IT AGAIN AFTER 40 LONG, THAT almost forgotten song that had stirred us to **helpless anger and finally turned our fear into** valor against the wicked regime of Marcos and his fellow scoundrels. It was being sung on that quiet morning by a 14-year-old boy with barefoot, feeling of anguish for...poor lately, without understanding its sentiment and meaning.

It had become popular during the dictatorship when it was first sung, innocently perhaps, by some unknown vocalist whose only ambition must have been to be another Dionesio Maramot and not to assassinate Ferdinand Marcos. Another singer, this one with political commitments, must have seen the song as a form of protest and so dared to sing it as such. Many others understood the potentials of the song for the cause of the Usiddo-headed by Salvador H. Laurel and began singing it too. Soon they himself and his son Lorenz and the household Collection, were also singing it.

Criticism of Marcos and his family was unduly prohibited and often landed many a reckless dissenter in a military prison. There were outstanding exceptions, of course, like Eggie Danes Apostol and her circle of female journalist-movie composers that many of their male colleagues. Senator J. B. Laurel Jr. delivered a scathing attack against the Marcos cases in a House where Imelda was guest of honor, and the audience applauded heartily but with their hands hidden tactfully under the table. Laurel was not arrested. There were the late professors, too, whom the military did not molest probably because they were wary of the students who protected so many from their hard seen to rap on as subtle pretending to be screens.

But it was not to these learned or feared groups that the song was important because they were spared from persecution in any case in the August had commanded. The song was especially useful to the general public who could be hauled to jail for any imagined or in-

national tendency against him, but not for simply singing it. The clever lawyers of the FLM-1 and the Mabini could argue for the civilian's many claims that the song merely expressed their deep love for their country and not their hatred of martial law. That song clearly implied that criminal feeling but it was subtly concealed in its innocent words.

The song was introduced during the 1920s, lyrics written by Jose Corazon de Jesus and the music composed by Constancio de Guzman. It immediately became the message of the nationalist movement that saw many Filipinos persecuted under the Sedition Law which remained by the American administration. Among those who sang were Isabel who at the age of 21 won a national poetry contest with his piece entitled "Himagsikan." Its escaped connection with the help of two young volunteers who later became members of the House of Representatives.

Display of the Philippine flag was prohibited then but not the singing of that song that inspired the dunes to die five more feelingly than the official national anthem that described our country as the "cradle of noble heroes" where, ironically, "we're shall breathless tranquil (its) we rest" hence. It compared to that tune hymn, the Divine song of the nationalist movement, while lamenting our subjection to a foreign power, merely described our country as a caged bird longing to be free but made the unsaid message clearly understood.

"Ang bayan kong Pilipinas, dapuin ng ganyan't hulahilak, pag ibig ang sa kanyang palad nag-alay ng pusong'i-alog." the song begins. "Ito sa kanyang nasa at pitak, alyakan at nakalitas, bayan ko, binalag ka, masalilak sa dusa." My Philippines, land of gold and flowers, have bestowed beauty and grace upon her. But her heart is heavy and countless atrocities by foreigners who had their acknowledges and despair.

"Bien nang may layang lumipad, kulungin mo at umiyak, hanot pa kayang sabihin ding ang di-maginating malayang." It even a bird that is free to fly will cry if it is confined in a cage, how much more will a country as grievful as ours weep if it is deprived of its liberty. "Pilipinas kong mamasdak, pugad ng lahi ko't dalita, aring sabihin, malaki kang sakdal laya." My beloved Philippines, land of my years and sadness, our fervent yearning is to see you completely free.

Such was the tender but resolute appeal of that song that it strengthened the peaceful efforts of our new leaders in words for our "countries, absolute and irrevocable independence" from the United States that we finally won in 1946. And its message was as poignant and demanding as ever when it urged the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and forced the resignation of Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Now it is Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's turn: its in John 1 and John 2. "Bayan ko" must be sung again to expel the hapless tenant from Malacañang, this time for the corruption of her administration, the patronized solitude that gave comfort to the dominant but succumb to the rich, the falsification of elections, the violation of human rights, the growing inroads of the military in the civilian government, the unreadiness of mediocrity in the public service, and many other serious abuses that regrettably were as true we are again not true.

And so the hateful song must sing and be heard again—loud and clear as in the violent days of the 80s, strong syllabic, malalim kung sakdal laya!

Humility is the key

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A PATIENT WHO was grimacing in pain and said: "Doctor, I have stomach pain!"

The doctor replied: "OK, I'll give you medicine."

And the patient said: "Sir, Doctor, please give me less, not more pain!"

* * *

In today's Gospel (Mt. 11, 25-30) Jesus tells us, "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Is there anything bothering you right now? Go back to the Lord, and let Him give you light, and lightness of heart. The key is God's heart and to your peace is humility.

* * *

We prolong and magnify our pain if we don't know how to surrender to God in humility. God's offer is clear: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." But instead of coming to God, we go to worldly solutions and illusions hoping to alleviate our pains, and we end up more burdened and more pained. Can you see just accept, unbundling your dependence on God and acknowledge your need for Him?

* * *

But those who think that they are "wise and learned" in this world, please listen to the Lord tell us again today that the key to true peace is humility. As long as you think you are some god, as long as you play the control and the power game, you are in the losing end. Sooner or later you will fail, and you will realize that you are frail. Stop playing games with God. Stop hurting yourself. Stop fleeing. Start going home. The way? Humility.

* * *

If you find yourself on a dead end, remember, humility is the key to open and unlock doors. Are you experiencing any "dead end" situation in your life right now? Instead of fleeing or grieving, or despairing, why don't you start praying and start picking up the pieces again? Remember, you are not yet dead, and it is not yet the end.

* * *

Papa and Mama always told me that it's better to be humble than to be proud, to be honest than to be dishonest, to be forgiving than to be tough. I used to look back and think that perhaps they thought that way because they did not have much in that life. But now, the more I think about it the more it seems to me that they thought that way precisely because they had much—they had God, they had values, and they had the wisdom of the "little ones."

* * *

I always end up my day on my knees before I sleep. I kneel before God and thank Him for the day that was, and in humility, I surrender everything—good or bad, happy or sad, and I feel peace and serenity within. Humility is the secret to a good night's rest. When one has surrendered everything, what is there still left for worrying?

* * *

In humility, we must acknowledge first we are all stewards and stewardesses in this world. We came to this world with nothing, and we are going to leave this world with nothing. Humility makes us realize that all worldly desires and achievements are empty and vain without God's approval and consent. Obey is humility and you'll have serenity. Humility and be

obey is power's sibling," the song begins. "Ito sa kanyang nasa at pitak, alyakan at nakalitas, bayan ko, binalag ka, masalilak sa dusa." My Philippines, land of gold and flowers, have bestowed beauty and grace upon her. But her heart is heavy and countless atrocities by foreigners who had their acknowledges and despair.

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Last week, a perennial counselor came to me telling me that finally she was free! Why? Because she has finally forgiven her cruelty in humility. If only she had forgiven earlier! She told me that when she let go of her hurt and swallowed her pride, she finally saw the light.

* * *

Speaking of light, every Saturday, at 8 p.m. through 10:30 p.m., tune in to dzMM 1630 khz on your radio dial! and join us in our radio program "Light Moments" as we pause for the Lord's day the next day, Sunday, Inday the program are diocese and share the Sunday Gospel. Joining us in our program, by telephone from San Pedro, Calbayog, will be 14-year-old Arriana Bernadette Ubiñez! can also join us by phone or by text. This program will be broadcast all over the world through telaradyo. So God be the glory!

* * *

Congratulations to Fr. Dionisio Miranda, SVD, on his investiture as the 10th president of the University of San Carlos, Cebu City. One with you in prayer as we remember, rejoice and renew on this our SVD centennial year in the Philippines.

* * *

"Mass's a Homemakers," a book by Angelica B. Ribola will be launched on July 9, 2 p.m. at the Hyper Center, Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City. It will be available at National Bookstore and Powerbooks outlets. The author shares powerful and deeply appreciated insights based on the concept that life is a stewardship. Yes, we are all stewards: stewardesses, and God is the pilot. We are all called to serve our brothers and sisters in humility as we journey.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, help me realize that humility is the key and the way to peace and serenity. Amen.

Most corrupt

"WE WILL WORK TO FIX THE CORRUPTION that has, unfortunately, long plagued our nation. We have been working to make control of the situation. Our efforts will culminate in creating a comprehensive anti-corruption reform act in 2008."

Most corrupt in East Asia and the world. Again, he attributed this "work in progress" remark to President Macapagal-Arroyo during her New York visit last year to solicit more investments in what is the Philippines. This is precisely also her self-responsive and expressed stance last week by the US-nominated World Bank slamming our country as the most corrupt in East Asia.

The 2008 PERC study shows Singapore as the least in corruption, followed by Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. Our country's corruption control nothing accounted from 10 previous to 1996 during the term of President Fidel V. Ramos. Only 2.5 percent in 2007 during the incumbency of President Arroyo, edging out Borneo, another Indonesia.

For many years, will-named Indonesia as the corruption basket for the prime embodiment of Chief's culture." I wonder what the PRO will pay of at now.

The PRE report validates earlier studies showing that corruption in our country has worsened. The Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) gave the Philippines a grade of 9.4/10 with 10 as the most possible grade in 2007, down sharply from 7.8 in 2006.

Similarly, the Corrupt-based Transparency International (TI), represented here by retired Judge Johnny Piguet, downgraded the Philippines' score last 123 countries in 2006 to 131 (among 180 countries) in 2007. Otherwise noted, TI rated the Philippines as the fifth most corrupt country in the world, and with Haiti, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Nigeria, Rwanda and Swaziland, their was the No. 1 most corrupt.

Most corrupt in history. The Philippines is yet ranked as the most graft ridden in East Asia and among the worst in the world, and our people signed the Arroyo administration as the most corrupt in history. To the question: "In your opinion, under which administration has there been the most serious allegations of corruption?" only Aquino's ex-Cabinet official endorsed on Oct. 20-31, 2007 revealed the list forming replies (in percentages): Arroyo administration—45; Marcos—31; Estrada—14; Ramos: 5; Aquino: 1; none/refused to answer/can't say—1.

To the same specific question "In your opinion, which government do you consider as the most corrupt in the Philippines?" the answer was more telling: Estrada—42 percent, Arroyo administration—41 percent, Ramos—7, Marcos—5, Aquino—1, and none/refused/can't say—2.

How did our policy-makers respond to all these damning findings? They tried to legislate our way out of it by passing the Anti-Graft Law during Marcos' time, the Code of Ethical Conduct for Public Officials and the Anti-Plunder Law during Aquino's term and the Anti-Red Tape Act during the present regime. Despite these laws and GMA's vow "to take control of the situation," the corruption that corruption remains unabated perceived. In fact, our general perception is it has worsened.

Former Sen. Francisco Tatad's findings, in his new book "Fight On for the Filipino," more than four years after GMA took power on Jan. 20, 2001, the ordered dark (Justice Secretary Hernando Perez to approve the "impeachment" deal that were then on all body vending with a $2 million bribery charge.

The only bureaucrat not implicated was appointed by many later revelations like the allegedly overpriced P1.3 billion Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, the Comelec's P1 billion, three-phased poll modernization program, the P728 million fertilizer scam, the $500 million Northrail project, and the sinking $329 million NBN-ZTE deal.

Redeeming the most corrupt. Neither will the New York announced "anti-corruption reform act" about this "most corrupt" perception. We already have enough laws; enough structures is maintained on to fight graft like the administration ally endorsed Ombudsman and Commission on Audit (not to mention the largely-unseen Presidential Anti-Graft Commission). What are needed are GMA's leadership by example to stamp out graft and corruption in her own backyard, strengthen these laws, the Ombudsman's independence and diligence to prosecute the monster wrongdoings, and COA's rugged incorruptibility in accountability.

Market Penalties, you say, will not reduce our poverty and investment because graft did not hamper economic growth in the past. Take the high trend now. Prosperity and need to jail some big names to extend to those unseeming doers, especially the MIG/ZTE. Show the former an unmonitored investigation. Regardless of the final Supreme Court decision, to Senator Sen. Sonny Alvar all, our country were vacation privileges at the greatest disrespect of removing Philippine dignity before the world.

Inform your inactive example: continue the Senate investigations are put in a satisfactory drama, and unless some big names unearthed with the some are prosecuted properly, the corruption perception will continue to worsen and may place us last. Not only to East Asia but also in the whole world, believe I last!

• • •

Comments are welcome at chiffpolitic@gmail-box@hotmail.com

Who's afraid of a food crisis?

A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE WORRIED OVER THE PROSPECT of rice and food shortage. Obviously they have not experienced hunger over long periods of time. I did as a growing boy during the cruel years (1941-1945) of Japanese military rule in our country.

Every day, food scarcity was downright real. Few stores had a regular supply of food, especially the packaged consumer goods. There was a total absence of the delicacies and luxuries like canned beef, luncheon meat, sardines, processed ham and bologna, smoked fish, candies, pickles, ketchup and many more grocery items. Canned dishes were out of the question.

High Blood

Minyong Ordoñez

There was practically a stoppage of private and public transport. Cargo trucks found running were seized by the Japanese military for use in carrying their soldiers and war weapons. With buses and fewer trucks available for civilian use, efficient food distribution became impossible.

Rice was the primary staple food of every town and fish market, if not sold within the day, ended up as smoked tinapa or sun-dried daing or ratuldays for longer shelf life.

In Majayjay, Laguna where we spent the worst of the war years, the problem was not only food scarcity but also the danger of getting killed in the crossfire between the Japanese and guerrillas.

To cope with the scarcity, the whole town learned to use substitute food. The Spanish school Majayjay provided the solution. It tells and plants, in backyard lots to plant beans, we planted all the available that we could. Camote leaves (camote), in fact, became a delicacy. Camote tops, gabi (taro) leaves, kangkong (water spinach), gabi stems (root), and kalabasa (squash) were also welcome additions to the menu.

Every able-bodied male and female, including children, made vegetable farming and vegetables as a regular chore.

In school, gardening and raising vegetable grew in the most fun among our subjects. After each harvest, we brought home with pride our pre-the fruits of our labor: pechay, labanos, talong, okra, ampalaya, papaya, and bulaklak.

In spite of the hardships and tragedies, Rizal dates, Christian socks feasts and Flores de Mayo celebrations were held without fail. In spite of the scarce supply of rice, no one in our town died of hunger. At least, the family stood out together if no particular where the available rice supply was not enough.

But signs of malnutrition occurred such as anemia, weight loss and skin breakouts in poor sectors of cities and barrios. The lack of medicine resulted in many deaths due to pernicious and tuberculosis. Infant mortality was high due to lack of children's medicines, vitamins and milk supplements.

Still, we were not completely deprived of delectables and sweet treats. Thanks to the seasonal harvests of calzky rice—that wonderful grain that can be made into pan, cookies, kalinggang, budagit, tuwalmos, pulpol, pulutan, tapuey—and that yummy Tibiraton rice cake called tiwada.

In Majayjay, Laguna, during the entire town history, many of locals were sprinkled with strawberry incense and grilled in street called tarimong, which tasted like cupra.

Sometimes the most unlikely of lowers come from hunger and even sad. Dean Lee Pilan caused depression. Majayjay did not produce those primary nuts-cashewnuts. Without sugar, there was no candy. But the locals did not lack for substitutes. My kindergarten Christmas was in 1943 when we had no rice eaters since sugar was not available. Sticky rice was also not available because all able-bodied male were locked up in the dreaded Japanese "Santa." Nobody was able to produce the sticky rice for the puto bumbong.

But life was not all travails. There were economic benefits in spite of the food scarcity. Most of the beneficiaries were farm communities which were able to dramatically increase their farm products and made good profits by defeating the price of their products. Urban and town people hoarding to satisfy demands on the black market. Before my family became "food lumpy." They assisted a take-it-or-leave-it attitude to communist high prices for their harvests.

Secondly, Filipinos learned to appreciate saving a variety of foods, sometimes foods. I, for one, appreciate farm-fried pet tuna, camote, gabi, and kalabasa, including butter in pulutan syrup. It's a perfect for pechay, talong, labanos and mustasa, the dungaon veggies for your country.

When the Americans returned and liberated the Philippines in 1945, Filipinos were ecstatic. The US army had a huge surplus of K rations, canned foods, army stocks, jeeps, and heavy machines. There was a thriving black market for all kinds of army foods and goods. Filipino males were overjoyed US army uniforms to replace tattered clothes. We pigged out on canned beef, luncheon meat, sardines, pork and beans, chili con carne, butter, jam, canned fruit cocktails, powdered and chocolate bars. Smoking Lucky Strike cigarettes was pure bliss. For boy-long years during the war, we missed these American products like mad.

US Army K-y-S rations ended up in private hands to do the job of public transport and food distribution. Army surplus included negotiable transport as well. End of the food crisis.

Who's afraid of a food crisis? Not me. Remember our land is vast, fertile and its rainfall is abundant.

Minyong Ordoñez is retired chair of the Pasig based Publius Communications Group. He is a member of the Manila Overseas Press Club. Email: executive@manilaclub.com.ph

Buster and Kim Sam-soon

PERHAPS THERE IS NO FASHION MORNING TV "treat" than "Buster," the much-not mummy who gave Cheers Corn plasters, but his stories stuffed with explosives, absurdity, bullets and other lethal material, and genuinely taken on the more fun-loving aspects of the great Discovery Channel show "MythBusters."

Now it cartoonists that "Buster" is actually a successful generation myth hunter, with the official name "Buster J.J.," since the original mummy has been very successful and bruised and needed to be retired.

By contrast, the five human hunters are as lush, healthy and hardbitten as ever, drowning up messes in power or desperate when no matter how as many times they've been through the process, and other myths. The team is headed by the pair of Adam Savage and Adam Savage, a duo described as having between them decades of experience in movie special effects, into a shared hankering for big bangs, explosions, and general mayhem. Adam is the one with a thick beard and a walrus moustache, back his own special effects firm, called MS Industries, and it's in his workshop where many of the many tests are conceived and constructed. Jamie Hyneman is the engineer and enthusiast to the show, along with much of the "fabrics" at Hyneman customs. The rest are joined by the "build team," who come up with many of the devices used in the show. Kari Byron, the only girl in the group, is the one with a tattoo of a walrus moustache, back his own special effects firm, called MS Industries, and it's in his workshop where many of the many tests are conceived and constructed. Tory Belleci who started his career as a go-fer on Bill Nelson the and started his rise to industrial Light and Magic. Steven Spielberg's special effects shop, and Grant Imahara, an expert in robotics and electronics who joined the show after RIDE show in the acknowledgeable first of the "Star Wars" movies. He is also, by the way, the owner of the five myth busters, hopefully eager, especially when he gets to create a new toy.

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

It's the interaction among the five, along with their incendiary antics (they don't count bigger entries they'd like to add a segment with a big bang), that you could say is "myth-busters" owner of success.

But I also suspect the fun that the myth busters believe even the most absurd myths and suppositions can be tied to run through science and observations. Albeit clearly, easily and irreverent, "MythBusters" is crushing in its "treat" that is proven not to take anything for granted and to question everything.

At the start of every show, the team discusses which myth or belief can stand some testing, and then they do several planning ways to see if it is necessary, and if so, if anything can be done among them. Savage has been quoted as saying that their goal in every show is to "replicate the circumstances and then duplicate the results." At the end of every "experiment," the team does a "confirmed" or "busted" verdict. Sometimes, it could be "plausible" or proven "confirmed."

Among my favorite busted myths is the saying "like a bull in a china shop." The team bet a herd of bulls run through a pen in which shelves of delicate china had been placed. Sure enough, the bulls ran through the rows of shelves without breaking a single item, proving that you can be a bull loose in a china shop.

"MythBusters" takes on a lot of the special effects in the movies. Can the Hulk's muscles subdue seven entirely possible and grounded on realism, but which are eventually proved to be impossible, if not absurd. But it also takes on popular beliefs like stories being able to walk on water, a human can be flattened by a car, a bazooka is impossible (human) you can find the needle, but you need a lot of time and large, noisy machines), and that blindfolded always get their man (confirmed, with George outgoing through the tunnels after dousing himself with cheap cologne!).

But of all, "MythBusters" is one show that proves science, logic and engineering can be loads of fun as well as endlessly entertaining.

• • •

I'll been looking forward to the local version of "Mr. Bean a million-man," as-cheat-mostly popular TV drama in Korea, which even gave rise to the "Kim-soon" effect among single women, especially those who are in their late 20s and early 30s, independent, and jobless of the pops be in terms of what makes a woman "attractive."

The Korean actress had to gain 13 pounds to make her character credible, for the "Kim-si Kim Sam-soon" is not a beauty queen. She's supposed to wear a fat suit. I think this was a mistake. The fat suit opens out how women in cartoons, and with her constant slogging and rubber boo-tones, Regine comes close to that. Which is unfortunate, since if they were wearing what made the original look good, or enhancing, it was her image by her refusal to fall into any one of the convenient clue which modern society is fond of assigning women to, as well as her all-too human reactions to various situations and circumstances.

The show could have been really engaging, or hope that as it moves along, Regine succeeds in convincing the fat suit (or does it lose weight) and has she goes deeper into her character. Finding the many issues that are embedded in the poor's life.

Still, it's refreshing to see that the transformation of a popular TV drama lead's in the imagination and art in the milieu of a society different from ours. Still like Sam-soon Bae remains in the top 10 of the most popular TV programs in the net's western of her generation? Will they recognize her dilemmas and desires at their own? Endings for "Kim Si Kim Sam-soon" have been sexually daunting and the show is already among the top three primetime TV dramas. Either "Dalcheol" and "Boogie Boogie," so expect it's will bring an audience of its own. I can only hope it does as without causing Sam-soon into a screen figure.

Peace on all fronts?

JERUSALEM—NOT SINCE THE COLLAPSE OF the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks during President Bill Clinton's last days in the White House has the Middle East seen such a frenzy of peace diplomacy as it is seeing today. A ceasefire has been brokered between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip; Israel and Syria have started peace negotiations; and Israel has offered Lebanon a chance to resolve the two countries' border disputes in a way that does not perhaps, yet persistent nonetheless, are the peace talks between Israel and President Mahmoud Abbas' Palestinian Authority.

As in the Middle East as the game of a losing, competitive zero-sum game.

Aside from the triumphant talks, which seem to be going nowhere because of the parties' inconsistencies, in some ways, the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas may be the most promising of the three. Not only because it is the most limited in scope—a peace deal with Hamas will not abandon its identity as a nationalist movement merely to gain acceptance—but also because it is the most likely to succeed.

For Israel, the ceasefire with Hamas refers to reluctance to become mired in another agonizing war like the one it fought in Lebanon six years ago, this time in the alleys of Gaza's refugee camps. Ehud Olmert, an especially unpopular prime minister whose days heading the government are probably numbered, lacks the legitimacy to invade the country into another bloody war which, given the conditions in Gaza, would be both costly and inconclusive. Israel's leaders believe that the day of sentencing with Hamas will come only when the conditions for a major military showdown are ripe.

The Syrian track—requiring Israel's withdrawal from the strategically vital Golan Heights and the dismantling of Syria's ties with Iran and Hezbollah—is hampered not only by the Israeli leadership's legitimacy deficit, but also by US opposition to the talks. For the Syrians, the major objective is combating peace with Israel is supplemented with the United States, thereby paving the way for a peace deal that they will ever agree to this. As Bashara Ghattan, a Syrian minister put it, "To demand that Syria breaks Hamas and Hezbollah is like asking Washington to cut off relations with Israel."

The United States has been absent from Middle East peacemaking for too long, indeed, for the first time in the history of its special relationship with Israel, America is not speaking as Israel's emissary, or even Israel's ally. Instead, it is a friend of Israel, ambivalent and facing a gathering storm of regional threats, had to find its own way to talk, without the diplomatic assistance of its big brother.

The relationship with Lebanon, to which US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice devoted most of her recent shuttle trips to the region, is a case in point. With America's desperate attempt to evolve its role as the main regional peace broker. After all, it was my Qatar that brokered Lebanon's domestic settlement. Egypt that mediated the Gaza ceasefire, and Turkey that is facilitating the Israeli-Syrian talks. Israel's shift to policy toward Syria, and that of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, was a public recognition of which countries can best help Israel achieve its goals. Washington's independence and diligence to prosecute the monster wrongdoings, and COA's rugged incorruptibility in accountability.

Market Penalties, you say, will not reduce our poverty and investment because graft did not hamper economic growth in the past. Take the high trend now. Prosecute and need to jail some big names to extend to those unseeming doers, especially the MIG/ZTE. Show the former an unmonitored investigation. Regardless of the final Supreme Court decision, to Senator Sen. Sonny Alvar all, our country were vacation privileges at the greatest disrespect of removing Philippine dignity before the world.

Inform your inactive example: continue the Senate investigations are put in a satisfactory drama, and unless some big names unearthed with the some are prosecuted properly, the corruption perception will continue to worsen and may place us last. Not only to East Asia but also in the whole world, believe I last!

• • •

Comments are welcome at chiffpolitic@gmail-box@hotmail.com

They Said

Revolting loss

"There are times that try the souls of men. But rabble we cannot rule the light for the poor sovereign, we shall prevail over time. There is only one way to lose this fight—when we lose our sense of revolt on the vocabulary of the poor."

—Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno

Act of stupidity

"Of course, rain, earthquake, typhoons are definitely acts of God but nothing right into the heart of the storm is not an act of God, it's an act of a stupid person."

—Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales

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TALK of the TOWN

Editor Juan F. Sarmiento Jr.

Foreign aid and CARP extension

By Sixto Brillantes Jr., Mary Ann Manahan and Eduardo C. Tadem

OPPONENTS OF EXTENDING THE COMPREhensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) insist that we suspend land redistribution and focus assistance on the farmer households that have received land under the program. We argue that it is not a question of land redistribution versus support. The challenge is how to effectively assist land reform beneficiaries while completing land redistribution.

Significant on paper

The government must not abandon land distribution at this time. On paper, CARP's land redistribution is significant. The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) claims that CARP has redistributed nearly 6 million hectares of land and changed tenancy relations in another 1 million hectares, benefiting about 3 million poor farmer households.

Aside from actual distribution being likely lower than what DAR claims, the fact is 1.4 million hectares of private agricultural lands remain to be distributed. Without CARP extension, no funding will be allocated and land redistribution, which is at the heart of land reform, is killed.

Strides should preceding support be abandoned. Land redistribution will come to naught if the economic viability of redistributed farms is not promoted.

Development assistance

Addressing land redistribution and support requires substantial funding. Completing the unfinished redistribution component alone will require P148 billion. On top of this, P66 billion more is needed for continued support services. Given the precarious fiscal position of the government and the low priority given to land reform, the extension of CARP funding beyond the year is a contested issue indeed.

At the past, the lack of funding commitments from national government counterparts has been cited as the reason for official development assistance (ODA). Agencies refused ODA on the Philippines' lax subsidy increased since the early 1990s. While this can partly be explained by the global trend to support three kinds of asset-reform programs, reform-minded agencies reform secretaries have also played a role.

Downside

Under Erineo Cardino, DAR was able to gain the trust and confidence of foreign donors. Since 1995, DAR has generated P67.8 billion for 58 projects in ODA loans and grants. This is significant considering that the total budget for CARP from 1988 to 2007 was P130 billion or 0.5 billion annually. Interestingly, despite CARP's uncertain future, 26 projects worth P15.3 billion are still in the pipeline.

While sustaining CARP, heavy reliance on ODA has its downside. For one, it contributes to the debt accumulation of the government. Of the total investment requirement for foreign-assisted projects, the ODA loan proceeds is highly skewed in favor of loans (See table).

Counterpart

The share of loans is 61 percent, while that of grants is only 18.6 percent. The remaining 20.4 percent is funded through Philippine counterparts, in cash or in kind, from the national government agencies, local government units and agrarian reform beneficiaries' organizations or cooperatives. For 2008, DAR is responsible for as much as P11 billion of the country's external debt.

For another, ODA has strings attached to it that may not be the best approach to CARP of the Philippines. In terms of operational allocation, since 1995, 60 percent (6,091 subprojects worth P38.4 billion) went to infrastructure development such as farm-to-market roads, irrigation systems, post-harvest facilities, potable water systems and solar dryers.

Social dimension

While infrastructure-related and enterprise-building projects are urgently necessary in agrarian reform communities (ARCs), they can also cause problems. This happens when such projects are undertaken without regard for the social and political dimensions of agrarian reform such as organizing and capacity-building for land reform petitioners and rights-advocacy groups.

Community and contractual development support, agricultural productivity and rural enterprise development, basic social services, gender and development, and land tenure improvement have taken a back seat.

Only 262,658 land reform beneficiaries were organized to formal associations and 95,819 land reform farmers and workers were provided with training activities on organizational development, agricultural productivity and others.

Turning a blind eye

This represents only 40 percent and 1 percent, respectively, of total land reform beneficiaries resulted by DOA. This is a lackluster record when compared with the physical infrastructures component.

Ownership of projects is another key problem in ODA. While donor countries acknowledge the importance of ownership of projects, they, however, turn a blind eye to demands to provide funds directly for land acquisition and distribution. The reason behind this is the perception that land markets would be distorted if ODA funds are channeled to landowners' compensation.

On the other hand, when donor countries express interest in land distribution such as in the case of the World Bank's Market Assisted Land Reform (MALR), three framework can even undermine the potential redistributive impact of land distribution. The MALR operates in a "willing buyer-willing seller" framework, which encourages land transfer through markets.

A local version, the World Bank-funded Community-Managed Agrarian Reform and Poverty Reduction Project (CMARPRP) was found to be marked by highly questionable land transactions (with violations of landowners ending up as beneficiaries), inappropriate projects and interventions by landlords and speculators.

A CARP balanseo rice plants on her palm on EDSA Avenue in Manila as she casts the outcome of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

PHOTO BY MARIAN THERESE CONTRACTOR

Contested impact

There is also the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), which proposes no focus only on support services, disallowing physical land distribution as indicated in its 2006 Post-2008 CARP formation study.

The extent of ODA's impact on the agrarian reform process is contested. DAR reports that, as of 2008, ODA infrastructure projects have reached half a million beneficiaries. DBM also claims that 329,000 jobs were generated, with 80 percent coming from road construction. Thus, most of the jobs were of short-term nature and therefore no sustainable employment opportunities were generated by ODA funds.

DAR recently evaluated four of its foreign-assisted projects covering 300 ARCs. It said that poverty incidence in the project sites declined by about 5 percent to 7 percent and that the average annual household income increased from 44 percent to 49 percent, based on 2005 data.

Inadequacies

These findings are welcome but not significant enough given the average national annual household income of P186 gaining inadequacies. The majority of ARCs have, in fact, not received any DAR assistance at all. There are 1,958 ARCs nationwide covering 995,114 beneficiaries, or only 22 percent of total CARP beneficiaries. Of these, only 1,078 ARCs (79 percent) are beneficiaries of ODA projects covering 403,437 beneficiaries. Of these that received ODA funds, most have pending land disputes; five top-post areas in landowners. Two-thirds of beneficiaries (2 million of 3 million) remain outside the ARCs.

Assessing the impact of ODA in land reform vis-à-vis the assessed objectives is more difficult. Usually, the main objective of projects is to "alleviate rural poverty and agricultural stagnation." It will be safe to impossible to isolate the direct contribution of the ODA-funded projects since many of them have focused interventions in specialized communities, i.e., ARCs, and do not deal with regional socioeconomic planning.

Power and bargaining

The significant impact and value of ODA for agrarian reform lie in the realm of politics. Throughout all its stages, ODA involves a political process of negotiations at different levels—between donors and recipient countries, between recipient countries and implementing agencies, and between implementers and end users. It is about power and bargaining, i.e., those in power can influence where the money goes and who gets the money.

To the extent that CARP has been a "walking sore" for ODA projects and a source of political patronage, misfeasance, graft, especially in Congress, opportunistically seen in ARCs and inadvertently become depleted land reform allies. Legislators can pressure DAR to include their provinces or districts in the list of NSC targets. In fact, the debates in Congress especially enforced in the imposition of ARCs. In the lower house, House Bill No. 6077, includes the provision for the creation of a "minimum of 3 ARCs ... per year ... in each legislative district with a predominantly agricultural production." In effect, ODA helped to shield CARP against administration forces within government.

Addressing contradictions

The problems arising from relying on ODA point to two things with respect to addressing CARP funding.

First, we all need to take an active role in shifting the thrust of ODA to make it more responsive to Philippine agrarian reform objectives. For instance, the ARCs to truly work, security of tenure is needed and this means seriously undergoing the highly political and controversial, yet necessary component of agrarian reform, i.e., land acquisition and distribution.

Second, the government must seriously rationalize its policy of pursuing an to the ODA donor community due to accessibility of CARP funding. The tendency to pass funding responsibility to the ODA community highlights the low priority given by government to CARP despite its policy pronouncements. This is contrasted by macroeconomic policies that tend to defeat and undermine the gains expected from agrarian reform.

For instance, land reform beneficiaries lacking support services and who are still socially and economically weak are unable to compete in an environment of liberalized entry of agricultural products. Instead of targeting land reform beneficiaries, DAR has prioritized the agribusiness sector. The lack of transforming land reform beneficiaries into a competitive entity has been left to DAR, with its technically challenged personnel and limited funds.

Urgent and necessary

In the end, the major benefit for CARP's extension is the low priority accorded to land reform by the Arroyo administration. So CARP performance is the same since 1988 with a mere 12.86 percent share of land reform output during the Ramos administration's 52.34 percent and the Aquino administration's 22.51 percent. The Arroyo administration's performance was only slightly better than the Estrada administration's (6.3 percent) because of the President Joseph Estrada had only 2.1 years compared with President Macapagal-Arroyo's seven.

In conclusion, ODA funds for land reform have been significant, but far from adequate and in many instances, even inappropriate. The key need, therefore, is to highlight the government's obligation in completing land distribution, ensuring the economic viability and political empowerment of land reform beneficiaries, and adhering to a lasting era of rural social justice. This is not an "either or" issue. Within the above context, the extension of CARP is both urgent and necessary.

[The authors are involved in a policy-oriented study on ODA and agrarian reform in collaboration with several researchers; the Asian research office of the Belgian Coalition of North-South Movements or the "11.11.11-Pilipinas" and the focus on the Global South. Brillantes M. Brillantes Jr., Ph.D., is Cananda Research chair in International Development Studies at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Canada. Mary Ann Manahan is a research associate with Focus on the Global South, a policy based think tank in Thailand. Eduardo C. Tadem, Ph.D., professor Eduardo C. Tadem, Ph.D., is associate professor of Asian Studies, University of the Philippines Diliman.]

Status of resource mobilization (1995-2008)

Projects / Types of assistance	Number of projects	Cost (in million pesos) Loan	Grant	GOP Share	Total
Completed	40	14,182.60	6,141.60	3,903.16	30,021.71
Ongoing	11	13,000.25	1,014.03	4,211.98	18,218.08
Capital assistance	6	13,000.25	934.35	4,204.78	18,139.23
Technical assistance	5	-	180.64	0.20	180.84
For implementation	1	6,270.40	-	2,080.81	8,041.21
Subtotal	58	33,253.21	8,155.45	10,284.34	57,791.00
Pipeline	28	13,487.39	13,213.12	1,102.00	31,402.51

Source: DAR (DA Portfolio Review, March 31, 2008)

Across the NATION

Senator says more fishermen are dead

Thieves tear apart statues of Baguio's US founders

BAGUIO CITY—A HANDFUL of residents and officials who gathered to celebrate 103-day Friendship Day here on Friday took the time out to revisit the relics honoring Baguio's American founders and discovered their statues and monuments destroyed or vandalized.

Monuments dedicated to architect Daniel Burnham, Col. Lyman Kinnon and Janice George Malcolm have been stripped of their bronze or ornamic decor.

Members of the Benevolence Association of Retired Persons (BARP) celebrated 103-day Friendship Day by exercising a sentimental number that says a lot about the Malcolm monument or a public square named after the man who drafted Baguio's 1909 charter.

Narciso Padilla, a former councilor, said he tracked down the number from "a friend," who asked for only the group "with no questions asked."

Another marker at the Malcolm Square is now considered lost.

"We were informed that the thieves melted it, so it is irretrievable," he said.

The BARP members are still searching the whole area for the group to find a pair of metal glasses that used to be fixed on Malcolm's bust.

It is more natural for Baguio City, which celebrates its centennial on Sept. 1, 2009, to remember 91-Am Friendship Day, Padilla said.

Beguio-ans designed by Burnham and built out of old Ifugao settlements by the American colonial government, he said.

The city's first mayors and local officials were Americans, who created the mountain resort as an alternative area of government during summers.

But the new generation no longer sees its relevance, he said.

Worse, thieves drove no record head with the city's history, he said.

Thieves did not spare the largest collection of statues at the Igorot Park here, after they tore off the Igorot statues' metallic g-strings, Padilla said.

He said many of the statues or busts cost no more than P100,000 each today, and would not have and value to anyone. Many were donated by residents.

The busts of Malcolm and Burnham were either headed by pork barrel or by rich donors, but other monuments were raised by the donation of a each of citizens by one person and the donation of 1 other committed by another person. We just pooled them together," he said.

Malcolm's bust was given penny and pregnancy when it was unveiled in 1993 at the Malcolm Square and it was graced by Malcolm's children, who came from the United States.

Burnham's bust was installed in 2005 to celebrate the centennial of Kennon Road's construction. Honoré Cabrera, chapter at Northern Luzon

BAGUIO-ati diner Marina Padilla, a former councilor, hastened the ceremonial washer of a bust of Janice George Malcolm which was stolen.

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—MORE FISHERMEN HAVE died and gone missing than the number of passengers on board the MV Princess of the Stars but they have not received equal attention and help from the national government, Sen. Richard Gordon said Friday.

The government should give equal attention to the search for the missing fishermen, including 87 from Cadiz City in Negros Occidental, and in the identification of the dead to give closure to the families of the victims, he said.

Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, told the lawmakers that 119 fishing vessels, 53 of which are from Western Visayas, were hit by Typhoon "Frank," leaving 324 dead, 800 missing and 254 survivors for a total of 1,481 fishermen.

The MV Princess of the Stars, which capsized off Sibuyan Island in Romblon province during the typhoon on June 21, had 866 passengers, of which the Coast Guard has reported 31 dead and 268 missing.

Two weeks after the typhoon, Gordon said there were still unidentified bodies of fishermen that were being buried in coastal communities where they were washed ashore because there were no experts being sent to help identify them.

In Cadiz City, for example, Mayor Salvador Escalante revealed that five unidentified bodies floated in its waterway have been buried in the city's cemetery.

Bodies of 41 other fishermen were also recovered from the waters off and around Cadiz, all of whom have been identified to have come from this city and its neighboring areas.

Gordon said he was sending a University of the Philippines forensic team headed by Dr. Raquel Fortun to Cadiz City and a National Bureau of Investigation team, to exhume and identify the unnamed dead.

Gordon added he asked Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to help the PNRC secure orders to exhume unidentified bodies that were buried in areas like Romblon and Cadiz so forensic experts can identify them.

He also called on Gonzalez and Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno to help ensure the need for local government, not to bury or exhume the bodies they find and instead immediately report their presence to the appropriate agencies and the PNRC for action.

Gordon said he informed Gonzalez and Puno that the PNRC has been informed that four unidentified bodies were buried in Claveria, Masbate; some bodies in Sagay, Bacolod, Silay, Cadiz, and 40 bodies in Punta Island.

Philippine Psychiatric Association

24th POSTGRADUATE COURSE & 19th MIDYEAR CONVENTION

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CONSPIRACY ALLEGED

Union demands transparency in sale of Transco

BAGUIO CITY—THE EMPLOYEES' union of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) has gone to the senate, seeking public support after it challenged the government's decision to sell the state-owned firm.

The Luzon chapter members of the Mindanao Transco Employees Association (MIGCO) distributed fact sheets to about 200 Baguio pedestrians on Saturday that alleged a conspiracy to hasten the privatization of the country's major power grid.

Walden Bello, Makabayan senth Luzon president, said the group needs to draw consumers' support this year.

Master One has been associated with businessman Ricky Razon, who owns key ports in Manila and abroad and is a key supporter of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Razon, who served as treasurer of the administration Senate ticket "Team Unity in the last elections, is also considered to be one of the most influential businessmen in the country today.

Officials of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., which is marketing off all government facilities, and the National Economic Development Authority, which supervises the government's privatization efforts, are principal architects of the complaint.

> "The absence of transparency had made the union too nervous about the sale..."

Record time

Transco manager Ike Lucas power grid and transmits power that flows through the rest of the archipelago.

"The public needs to know that government is repeating the abuses we all suffered when it deregulated the power industry and broke up the National Power Corp.," Bowler said.

According to the Mindoro fact sheet, Congress has been rushing the passage of a franchise law for MGCP while the firm "continues to somewhat Mindoro's demands for [a version assurances] that they will abide everyone [working in Transco]."

'Sweetheart deal'

While negotiations continue, it said the House of Representatives and the Senate managed to shepherd their respective measures to second reading in record time.

The absence of transparency had made the union "too nervous" about the sale, Bowler said.

The Mindoro fact sheet said Transco's sale was "a sweetheart deal" for MGCP because it stands "to earn between P10 billion and P20 billion in net profits annually" and would recover its investments "in just four to five years of operations."

"If you find all these [details] unbelievable not only for all Transco workers but for all Filipinos, then you are not alone... This issue is on our shoulders but to close ranks and rally behind Mindoro," it said.

Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Feeling alluded to, mayor sues paper over Hanjin reports

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—SAYING HE FELT alluded to, the mayor of a town in Misamis Oriental sued a newspaper here for libel for reporting that local officials, including two town mayors, were squeezing Korean firm Hanjin dry of contracts to pave the way for the firm's shipyard project.

Mayor Pedrito Ermite filed the libel case against members of the staff of the Goldstar Daily, a newspaper based in this city and in circulation all over Mindanao.

Named were Herbie Gomez, the paper's editor in chief; Ernesto Ora, president of Goldstar Publishing and Marketing Corp.; and Lizzelle Arango, the reporter who wrote the story.

Gomez said the libel suit followed the publication by the newspaper last May 1 of an article alleging the involvement of local officials in efforts to secure juicy contracts to supply Hanjin Heavy Industries Inc. with construction materials for its planned shipyard in the town.

The article was the paper's banner story on that day.

No names

The controversy caught Malaudenang's attention after Hanjin said it has stopped conversations of the shipyard over a feud with local executives in the planned shipyard site.

"No names were mentioned in that story," said Gomez.

"What it said was that two local officials are involved in corruption and that one local official wanted to supply aggregates and the other local official wanted to supply steel [for Hanjin]."

Gomez quoted Ermite's officials as saying "the mayor is the alleged to as one of the local officials because he is the one approving permits."

Ermite's complaint was supported by a joint affidavit submitted by Tagoloan Councilor Armando Pumar and Robinson Sinkis, who said they, too, believed that the mayor was one of the unnamed officials being referred to in the story.

"We think that the only one alluding to the complainant is the complainant himself," Gomez said.

Ora, in his affidavit, said he does not control which stories the newspaper prints.

Judgment call

"It's a judgment call of the editors, who independently run the paper," he said.

"The publisher of Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction Corp. Ilsan Mission Oriental involved public interest. All we did was to some out with a story to inform the public about the situation," Gomez said.

Gomez and the other respondents filed their counter-affidavits at the Justice Hall here yesterday but they were accompanied by officers and members of the Cagayan de Oro Press Club.

Gomez said the libel suit filed against them underscored the importance of the bill now pending in Congress, which seeks to decriminalize libel.

"We in the Cagayan de Oro press club take this as an occasion to renew our call for the decriminalization of libel. The writers of us are actually in the service of the people, and we cannot do our job if we are hampered by threats of libel," he said. Mia Cecilia Rodriguez and Hilda S. Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao

Vice mayor who won poll case shot dead

ILIGAN CITY—UNIDENTIFIED ARMED MEN shot dead the vice mayor of Pantar, Lanao del Norte, police authorities said yesterday.

Already, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) started an investigation into the killing of Vice Mayor Abdul Rashid Omar.

Omar was standing outside the bakery owned by one of his children in Barangay Poblacion when he was shot around 3:20 p.m. Thursday, according to Senior Supt. Leong Bagol, Lanao del Norte police chief.

Bagol said Omar died from a lone gunshot wound to the head.

The assassins fled on motorcycles, he said.

Rachel Ortal, Inquirer Mindanao

INQUIRER Mindanao

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Davao Cityl Nina R. Alvarado

Mindanaoans want bigger say in loans

By Gerrodina Lacerte
Davao City

MINDANAO CIVIC GROUPS are hunting for a more direct hand, and a greater voice, in the use of Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds being poured out by rich donor countries into the island.

Although ODA funds in support for the peace and development efforts in Mindanao have been increasing in the last three years, civic groups directly working in the grassroots have been largely left out and deprived access to those funds, said Lydia Cacayan, of the AidWatch Mindanao.

AidWatch is a network of civic groups currently reviewing the impact of ODA projects in Mindanao.

Cacayan said that a total of $9.2 billion in ODAs has been poured into the Philippines last year, of which $709 million was in Mindanao. She said most of the funds, however, are coursed through government mechanisms that are open for corruption, and carried out by government agencies whose framework does not necessarily address the needs felt by grassroots communities.

Her claims jibed with the observations of the Mindanao Economic Development Council (Medco) executive who said that although a lot of foreign aid has been pouring in to support the peace agenda, Mindanao has been left out in the decision making process in the implementation of that aid.

"A lot of foreign aid has been poured in to support the peace agenda in Mindanao but are these initiatives and decisions coming from Mindanao?" asked Lopez, Medco executive director, in a recent salvo during the AidWatch forum. "Or are they coming from foreign donors and other outsiders?"

"We don't allow discussions and forum on Mindanao without including us in those forums," said Lopez.

Cacayan noted that most of the foreign aid coming to Mindanao in the last three years has been concentrated mainly in conflict areas linked with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"While we are convinced that Muslim communities deserve this attention and even more, we believe that this should not prejudice others to cover areas affected by other conflicts," she said.

Cacayan said there are other armed conflicts in Mindanao that also deserved equal attention. Aside from the political wars waged by the Communist New People's Army, the MILF and MNLF, there local conflicts like clan wars and rido also displace people from their communities.

"We are concerned that aid, by not paying attention to these conflicts and to the factors that drive them, could be inadvertently setting up the stage for even more conflicts in the future," Cacayan said.

Lopez said, however, that Mindanao only gets 38 percent of the ODA funds compared to Luzon which gets 39 percent.

"Mindanao's share in the ODA is so disproportionate because most of the mega projects are in Luzon," Lopez said, adding that areas with the highest poverty incidences, poor human development index and which are more vulnerable to conflict are in Mindanao, which include the provinces of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, Zamboanga, Sarangani, Surigao del Sur, Zamboanga and Surigao del Norte.

Sonny Africa, research head of the research think tank from Philippines, said that foreign aid pouring into the country in the last five decades failed to address poverty because they are carried out based on the agenda of donor countries instead of the actual needs of the communities.

He cited, for instance, that 75 percent of the US aid is in Mindanao, in support of US Army presence, like the Balikatan exercises.

"They're not implemented in the country based on the context of genuine needs of the communities but based on the donor agency's agenda."

Jerrimie Sanchez, executive director of the Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc. (MISFI), also noted that ODA-funded infrastructure projects are concentrated in areas targeted for mining, which only showed how ODA is being used to pave the way for the entry of big companies at the expense of the communities.

"We are very keen to understand where the continuing influence of the country on ODAs but where and how is aid spent and not spent? Who benefits from this aid? How does aid impact on Mindanao and the rest of the country?" asked Cacayan.

She cited that in the 1950s and 1960s, Mindanao has been receiving "development assistance" that turned Mindanao into a "food and raw materials suppliers" to other industrialized economies.

Later, those aids opened up Mindanao to migrants, which only robbed its original settlers ownership of the land.

Cacayan expressed concern that ODAs are becoming an important source of funds to promote peace and address conflicts in Mindanao but these ODA projects are being carried out without a representation of the CSOs.

"Although Mindanao is way ahead of Luzon in terms of donor and government efforts, CSOs are not represented to the Mindanao Working Group," she said. "This is unfortunate because CSOs represent the grassroot and important in the delivery of services to the communities long before the introduction programs of the governments."

AidWatch is asking the foreign donors to comply with their commitment in the Paris declaration, to make aid more effective to addressing poverty by involving recipient communities in discussing, monitoring and implementation of those aids, Cacayan said.

Lopez said infrastructures make up about half of the ODA projects in Mindanao and only a smaller portion going to the social sector.

She said Medco ensures that development projects in Mindanao do not overlap with other Medco is coming up with an ODA database to make information on ODAs to the country more transparent. The database will allow people to track down the projects down to the barangay level.

SOME OF the poor in Davao City live on the recycling of scrap metal. The waste materials that junk shops in the city are hauled in a ship to be delivered for recycling in Iligan City metal processing plant. RICHARD SANTOS

'A lot of foreign aid has been poured in to support the peace agenda in Mindanao but are these initiatives and decisions coming from Mindanao?'

WHEN to see cave-to-house, the poor make noise. Children join their parents in a recent mass protest against increasing prices of commodities, particularly rice, in many parts of Mindanao. One such rally was held in Cagayan de Oro City near a public market. EDGAR SARMIENTO

Photo by Mike
PRINT TOWN

Bar Topnotchers' Pre-week Review
When: September 2, 9, 16 & 23, 2008
1:00pm - 6:30pm
Where: Pearl Manila Hotel
General Luna St. cor. Taft Ave. & United Nations Ave. Ermita, Manila
SEPTEMBER 2, 9, 16, 23 – 4 TUESDAYS FROM 1:00PM-6:30PM – PEARL MANILA HOTEL
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Go for Green

E-jeepneys take over 2 Makati villages' routes

By DJ Yap

MAKATI Mayor Jejomar Binay and company load the e-jeep's first commercial run in Makati on July 1.

SLEEK, COLORFUL AND environment-friendly, the electric powered or "e-jeepney" finally made its commercial debut at the Makati central business district early this month, drawing plaudits from faith lovers everywhere.

A year after the pilot test of the project on Ayala Avenue, environmentalists and city officials rolled out the first batch of 74 motor e-jeepneys that were assigned separate routes around Legaspi and Salcedo Villages in the financial district. (See e-jeep routes below)

"We consider this a historic event. This will revolutionize the transport sector in the country" said environment boss Mercedes Fernandez, executive director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia.

Milestone

"This is a milestone in the history of motor vehicles in the Philippines," said Land Transportation Office chief Alberto Suansing. "We shall soon see electric-powered vehicles in other places."

The e-jeepney project is a venture of Green Renewable Inc., dependent Power Producer Inc. (GNPP), which originated from transport and other groups, and the city of Makati.

Costing P500,000 each and running on batteries charged via electrical sockets overnight, these e-jeepneys will service office employees in the two villages for the meantime, in expectation that is subject to further plans of expansion.

For the first week, commuters rode the brightly painted e-jeepneys with designs by artist Toym Imao, son of National Artist Abdulmari Imao, free of charge.

Later, they will be run like any ordinary jeepney with commutable passenger fare rates, city officials said.

The campaign is part of GNPP's Climate Friendly Cities Project, a multipronged program for mitigating climate change that promotes transport and waste management initiatives through renewable energy-based technology.

The projected benefits include the following:

- the reduction of greenhouse gases and air pollutants
- the containment of landuse that compromise groundwater
- the displacement of fossil fuel
- the treatment of organic waste, and
- the improvement of land air, health and safety.

Blessing in disguise

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said the rather delayed introduction of the e-jeepneys—a consequence of technical and bureaucratic issues—was a blessing in disguise.

"If we had officially introduced the e-jeepneys a year ago, we would hardly feel the need for it. But because of the rising cost of fuel, and the problem of air pollution, these vehicles are now very timely up-limbs," he said.

Ferdie Raquel Santos of the Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (MVPMAP), the local assemblers of two of the four units, said the e-jeepneys "are a true Filipino vehicle with 90 percent local content."

"It can run 40 to 60 kilometers per hour with six to eight hours of charging time. Each charge would run 50 to 60 kilometers," he said, citing "conservative estimates."

A single charge will cost just P150, amounting to a 75 percent kilometer expense as opposed to the prevailing P6 per kilometer rate among diesel engines, Santos added.

Furthermore, a single charge will allow a driver to go all the way to Lipa City from Magallanes in Makati City, he said.

Translucent into transportation terms, charging the battery overnight will allow a driver to make-about 120 to 150 round trips in a three-kilometer route for two to three days, the organizers said.

Electrocution

MVPMAP also allayed fears that riding the e-jeepney could lead to electrocution in case of heavy floods, saying the battery would only run the risk of dying only when submerged in flood-water. Otherwise, it would work fine even during heavy rains.

For now, the e-jeepneys can only be charged in vault markets, but plans are already afoot for the second phase of GNPP's Climate Friendly Cities Project, which involves the establishment of biogas digesters to power the e-jeepney batteries.

Binay said the city government would study the viability of building 20 more e-jeepneys in the business district.

"In Makati, we have started with e-jeepneys in the hope that when it becomes commercially viable, it will address the problems of rising fuel costs, promote the use of alternative fuels and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming," he said.

Savings on costs

GNPP chair Alberto Ballesteros said the use of biogas digesters, which converts biodegradable waste from households and restaurants, is to generate energy, would theoretically save costs.

"If we're not going to use electricity from Meralco (Manila Electric Co.) and start using the biogas digesters, we can still save up to one peso per kilowatt hour," she said.

She added that Makati City and other local governments were already in the process of developing biogas power plants for the projects.

Herminegildo San Miguel, the city's department of public safety director, said operations of the e-jeepneys start at 7 a.m. and end at 7 p.m.

Binay said the city government would study the viability of fielding 20 more e-jeepneys in the business district.

"In Makati, we have started with e-jeepneys in the hope that when it becomes commercially viable, it will address the problems of rising fuel costs, promote the use of alternative fuels and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming," he said.

Where you can take the e-jeepney when in Makati City

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GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor Gerry Lirio

SUNDAY, JULY 6, 2008

"THE 1.3 PERCENT GDP growth statistic underscores the growth of overseas Filipinos entering the workforce for fulfillment known as the Intermediate in 2007, the slowest in 2002, the OFW contribution ..."
BOB SERRIEL, May 2008

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This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in leadership, in constructive silence and in the business of the world to success at t... ...ves. These are their stories.

This Larry 'king' is Pinoy's toast of Italian buffet in Hong Kong

By Blanche S. Rivera
Correspondent

HONG KONG—HE DID NOT HAVE THE RECIPE for success, but fate whipped up something extraordinarily marvelous for Lauro Ortas.

> The only thing more colorful than the Italian lunch buffet he prepares daily is, well, his life

The Filipino, a once high school graduate from Camp Aguinaldo, a lowly steward now known as Chef Larry, the man behind the (until) popular Italian buffet at the Conrad Hotel's Nicholini's restaurant, which is in an northern Italian in a foreign restaurant city.

Nicholini's has been voted by food connoisseurs as the last Italian restaurant outside of Italy that dares most Otaku look into. In 1998, no less than Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro sponsored the hospitality Ministers that came to Nicholini's.

"Buffet is my life," says Ortas, who has earned the label the most enthusiastic chef in Hong Kong. "What my food is not there, I feel good. I cook with my heart. I cook with passion."

His presence at the buffet table, proudly explaining the Amalfi Seafood Salad or the Pasta Primavera has become such a pleasant experience for guests that some make a check with the hotel management's references he is absent.

Who's who

Nicholini's guest list has a certain that includes buffet-lunch hit-list. Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, former Philippine president Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada; President Arroyo when she was still vice president, Philippine senators like Heidi Mendoza and Jinggoy Estrada, Filipino "doctor to the stars" Vicki Belo, who used to fly in twice a week just for Nicholini's lunch buffet.

The Hong Kong Magazine said in an article on Nicholini's: "What will make you swear back: pasta and Dolce."

"We use the can do what he does," Italian executive man chef Amedeo Salfo says of the Filipino. "Larry is King here."

He is king indeed, but perhaps the only king who drove limbo in the kitchen he oversee else.

Ortas goes to work as early as 6:30 a.m., three hours before his actual duty begins, so he can do all the dishes before the rest of the staff comes in. By 10 a.m., he is done with the 20 to 40 dishes, which often include his signature Crab Alaska with passion fruit sauce and mango, lobster pasta, apple salad, goose liver terrine with pecans and drinks.

"Everything I've learned from renowned chefs around the world, I put into this buffet," says the master-cook chef, who has been working for 32 years and has spent the last 13 years with Conrad Hotel.

The only thing more colorful than the Italian lunch buffet Ortas prepares daily is, well, his life.

At 4, in Sampaloc, Ortas is in his cookbook "too lazy and stupid" for college. He failed the National College Entrance Examination and could barely read and write English even after high school graduation.

"Hungry ako eh. Plano I graduate na high school, I thought, 'what am I going to do with my life?' I tried to go aboard (the world), I want a house, I want everything. How will I ever get there?" he recalls thinking when he was 16 years old.

The answer came when, with the help of his uncle, he landed a job in the kitchen of the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati, Philippines. The work was not new to him because of his income in Camp Aguinaldo, he always cooked for his parents and some other siblings.

What made the hotel job hunt was the fact that he did not know the English words for the simplest items, like spoons and napkin, which he had to learn for the check.

For this, he sought the help of a Filipino assigned in the storage room who gladly taught him. He also made it a point to send newspapers and learn our English word, or phrase a day. In the downtime, he observed and took down notes while the chefs were cooking.

When new hands opened in Makati, the chefs at the Intercontinental, knowing Ortas in charge of the kitchen. He managed as well at the coffee shop than the kitchen's owners was pressured to rehire. This marked the start of Ortas' career.

To Europe for training

Hopping from one store to the next, he learned how to carve ice and butter, how to make sugar and swans, how to fold napkins and prepare dishes—everything that would make him an all-around chef. He was also sent to Europe for training.

After seven years with international cuisine, Ortas moved to Cafe Mezzanotte, where he learned to prepare the best Filipino foods.

Once his seafood buffet was approved in existing king of Bites, that the king wanted to bite him, but his employers refused to let him go.

After less than a year with Cafe Mezzanotte, Ortas left the country to work at the Shoreline Hotel in Riyadh for a year, during which time he learned Arabic. This knowledge of Arabic landed him—and about 200 other Filipinos he picked in Manila—jobs at an air base in Dubai, where he was responsible for feeding the Dubai Air Show and the American troops serving with them during the first Gulf War.

He stayed in Dubai for seven years. There, Ortas' good guys at with Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, crown prince of Dubai, was well-known. The sheikh gave Ortas the name Rashid Al Mezzan and introduced him to people in his brother.

"I lived like a king. I had a good life. I had three days of work, three days off. I went into business," says Ortas, who had helped many downward Filipino domestic helpers get jobs at hotels in Dubai because of his connections.

He returned to the Philippines in 1992 but was lured back to these sand continents, the last on words with a passenger's new friend. Every now, Ortas says nothing for a minute would explain the fact that he regained consciousness after being declared dead, and despite his house having been ransacked during the robbery, he recovered two weeks after being discharged from the hospital of thieves respite.

"God saved me. I know I have a mission in the world. So I prayed, whatever it is, let me do it now," he says.

Royal journey

Determined to fulfill his dream of opening this world, Ortas went on board the Royal Princess Cruise ships and embarked on a journey of a lifetime.

His job was to train the new chefs in all the Royal Princess cruise ships, as he already picked a place he wanted to see—and get to know the ship that was going there. When he got bored, he simply literally jumped ships. In three years, he has visited the world.

"I have seen the world, but the best place to still home sweet home. You go anywhere in the world, it's about ease. You are a stranger in a strange land. But in your own country, you're a king. I tell everyone that I'm Filipino. I'm proud of it," he says.

He encourages with the general manager of Conrad Hotel during a culinary demonstration in Los Angeles in 1998 led him to Hong Kong.

"There was no Filipino chef at the hotel. They looked down on chefs, especially if Filipino," Ortas says, recalling how one of the staff referred to him as "that's-a-ing Filipino." He complained to the general manager, who gave him license to do whatever he wanted. He fired the two assistant staff.

After 11 years in the hotel industry, Ortas plans on setting up the first fine-dining Filipino restaurant in Hong Kong and a culinary school.

"I want to help those who did not get to school like me. I can train them in my restaurant and teach them to work—cruise ships or they can also go to school," he says.

But not yet.

For now, he relishes his role as the guy behind the buffet table where he happily tells his guests:

'Everybody eat'

"When you see a dad sister going to meet a lot of big people who are otherwise very hard to meet when they are at their office. They will come to you and embrace you. Wherever they are, even if they are kings, they will look for chefs when they eat hungry. Everybody eats. That's why this is a wonderful job," he says, with a delicious smile.

AT THE center of the creation, Chef Larry serves guests like Antonio Joseph Estrada, Frank Drilon, and Vicki Belo in Nicholini's at Conrad Hotel for the best Italian food outside Italy.

Radio Pinoy in Rome: *Ciao, buona sera*

By Ma. Caren P. Dayo

CIAO GRAZIE...BUONA SERA.

Like generations, these Italian words mellow the vast airwaves and phone callers a week. In Filipino radio program that airs from Rome. The student and callers are Filipino, most of them also call for and donors. It's not hard to find.

The radio program is Radio Pilipino in Roma (RPR) on 97.50 FM that airs every Monday from 13 to 14 p.m. corresponds to 19 to 20 p.m. 11.

It's been on air for 18 years and has mapped from one radio station to another. In 1990, it was a one hour slot in Radio Blanch one 32 owned by the Salesian fathers.

Fr. Cesario Sitte T. Saundo is of Fr. Sonny to his friends is on and active in the Philippines and in both issue of the Filipino community in Rome, Italy. Although his main job is with the Vatican office of Centro che Catholic-Chinese international social welfare agencies, radio work has added more meaning to Fr. Sonny's stay in the Sacred City.

"RPR is not a church program," he said. "We feed the lives of people. "It is just a program of and for Pinoys. It is run and managed by these overseas Filipinos themselves, namely: Cora Jane Jose from Marsters, Augusto Cruz from Times, and myself, a religious worker in the Vatican. The three of us do it as a service to our fellow OFWs. Mula kasing bagsak. Abonado pa kami sa ating blessings ang hanol na ito—the service." (We don't receive any pay. We even put in our own 2 there is not enough to pay the radio station.)

RPR started on Nov. 4, 1990 under the auspices of Liga Italo-Filipino Amigoni (LIFE) at Radio Citta Aperta owned by the Communist Party in Italy. The founders were Gois Sisi of LIFE, Monsi Emily who was a Protestant, Fr. Dagohoy SDB before he became an OFW and Gois Sisi Jose. Fr. Sonny who had broadcast experience took on his absence, joined shortly after RPR started.

Fr. Sonny recalled: "The air time then was free and we didn't have to pay the radio station. Three years later we had to move out when management tried to influence and dictate on the programs content."

Freedom is not free

RPR found another station, the Radio Finalmente 2 owned by the Radical Party of Italy. "Because it had a noticeable frequency we were listened to all over Italy, from Milan down to Reggio Calabria," RPR enjoyed freedom from interference by the owners. But this freedom was not for free.

Fr. Sonny said they were able to get 192 Hauls, which opened a branch in Rome at that time, to sponsor the program. "RPR did a lot to promote 192 Hauls Express Pakkels and made it the No. 1 courier service in Italy." 192 later merged with Equitable. It is now Banco de Oro.)

A management change in Radio Finalmente 2 six years ago caused another move for RPR. "We were told to move out per instruction of the new owners. We found out that the new policy was the Italians only. No immigrants. So we had to search for another station."

The search brought RPR to Radio Studio Moskitano 13. Air time was not free and charges were higher than in the previous station. Fr. Sonny said RPR was able to get Philcargo Freight Services to be one of the sponsors. "Philcargo is owned by OFWs Pol and Evelyn Reyes who started off as domestic helpers and later ventured into the cargo business. Now and then we get cute on short-time sponsors. But latest sponsor is the Philippines Labor Office-OWWA-Pagibig-SSS combined group. We also do some fundraising. Generous people chip in. We have the Friends of RPR that supports in its many ways."

Four years after RPR started, RPR co-founder Mimi Daulig opened to Milan and was replaced by Jessie Ramirez who, Fr. Sonny said, became crazy. "Kaya ang nangyari, nagkaroon ng financial mess. Nawala ang mga sponsors. Ang latest sponsor is the Philippines Labor Office-OWWA-Pagibig-SSS combined group. We also do some fundraising. Generous people chip in. We have the Friends of RPR that supports in its many ways."

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SOME of the people behind RPR, from left: Angie Cruz, Caroline Jose, Fr. Cesario Saundo.

"We only play OPM (original Filipino music), nothing else," Fr. Sonny said. "May mga OPM na pwedeng ituon dito among the Pinoys. (There were OPM that became hits among the Pinoys here, thanks to us.) The format is simple. Introduction, Philippine news, announcements of incoming issues in the Philippines, then why I am regular reader of the business online. We have information and announcements from the Labor Office of the Philippines embassy. We discuss Italian legislations related to migrant issues such as documentation, divorce, hiring, taxes, social security."

RPR Lolo

Fr. Sonny and his RPR family all have amazing stories to tell about the calls and text messages they get during the programs. Some of these have been transcribed and compiled. Fr. Sonny titled them "RPR Lolo." A sample:

RPR: Here time na kung kumanig?

Caller: Anhehemog na ako kanina. Bwa-aah siya hold your line.

RPR: Bakit nanaman, Anthony na ito naka-ang hawa?

Caller: Kaya nga ito kawalanhawak ito na mongo-mo.

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Chanco

Betancourt gets hero's welcome in France

Freed hostage to get medical tests; Colombia denies paying $20-M ransom

PARIS—FREED COLOMBIAN POLITICIAN Ingrid Betancourt faced a day of medical tests in Paris Saturday after receiving a hero's welcome following her six-year hostage ordeal, as video footage was released of her dramatic rescue.

Snatched from the jetty of Macuri (FARC rebels in a Colombian army operation on Wednesday along with three US hostages and 11 Colombians, Betancourt arrived in France on Friday on board a French presidential plane from Bogota.

After being feted by President Nicolas Sarkozy at the Elysee Palace, the 46-year-old former Colombian presidential candidate, who also has French nationality, was to spend Saturday undergoing an in-depth medical examination at a military hospital in Paris.

Though she told reporters she felt "in great shape," she developed a string of ailments while in captivity, possibly including hepatitis.

On arrival in Villacoublay airbase outside Paris, Betancourt walked smiling down the stairs of the plane to minister Kouchner and First Lady Carla Bruni, waiting to welcome her to her second home.

"I am so happy to breathe the air of France. I miss France every thing," she told the crowd waiting to welcome her.

"I have shed a great many tears of pain and indignation. Today, I am crying with joy," she said, her voice breaking with emotion. "You saved my life."

"Ingrid Betancourt, welcome. France loves you," Embassy told her.

Betancourt paid a personal tribute to the French president, who made her release a top priority, as "this extraordinary man who fought so hard for me."

A video showing hostages angry and resigned at having their hands bound, and then minutes later sobbing with jubilation aboard a helicopter upon discovering they had been freed, was shown on Friday for the first time by Colombian military.

The video of FARC rebels lovingly handing over the 15 hostages to disguised Colombian commandos was released to counter questions about the military's dramatic and bloodless coup, Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos said.

The video shows the ten unarmed, disguised Colombian commandos binding the hands of the hostages with plastic cuffs, as one hostage, a Colombian soldier, angrily scolds the fake guerrillas for his treatment.

Once aboard the disguised military helicopter, the video shows Betancourt and others erasing in surprise and breaking out in tears after cuffs were removed and the soldiers revealed themselves.

"This is absolutely false," Santos told reporters, when asked about reports that $20 million had been paid in ransom.

"We have not paid one single cent, much less $20 million. That would have been crimes," he said.

"Because we had offered $100 million. If they would have just handed over the hostages, there wouldn't have been any mission."

AFP

BETANCOURT reacts during a news conference at the Hotel Matignon in Paris July 4.

Khan: Nokor got nuke components with Musharraf's consent

ISLAMABAD—PRESIDENT'S ARMY under President Pervez Musharraf oversaw the shipment of key nuclear components to North Korea in 2006, the architect of Pakistan's nuclear program said.

The allegations were made by scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who was sacked and disgraced after his 2004 confession that he was solely responsible for spreading nuclear technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya.

The retired scientist's comments would prove deeply embarrassing for Pakistan, which has vigorously denied its army or government knew about Khan's proliferation activities.

In a telephone interview with The Associated Press on Friday, Khan said sorotikgen—uranium enrichment equipment—were sent from Pakistan to a North Korean plane that was loaded under the supervision of Pakistani security officials.

Khan said the army had "complete knowledge" of the shipment of used F-7 centrifuges to North Korea and that it must have been sent with the consent of Musharraf, the then army chief who took power in a 1999 coup.

"It was a North Korean plane, and the army had complete knowledge about it and the equipment," Khan said. "It must have gone with his (Musharraf's) consent."

Musharraf's spokesperson, Rashid Qureshi, rejected Khan's claims. "I can say with full confidence that it is all lies and false statements," he said.

In a speech on Friday, Musharraf himself made no mention of Khan's allegations, but said he would not quit the presidency—a political opposition have been demanding—as he still had a valuable role to play.

After his 2004 confession, Khan was pardoned by Musharraf but he has effectively been kept under house arrest at his opulent villa in Islamabad.

Since a new civilian government took power after February elections, eclipsing Musharraf, the scientist has increasingly spoken out in the media. However, previously, he has not implicated anyone or explicitly said the army was aware of nuclear shipments.

AP

A PRESIDENTIAL elite state special security unit adjusts his hat so as to parrot in front of the legendary Mongol leader Genghis Khan statue near the barbed-out headquarters of the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party in Ulan Bator on July 5 after rival deadly riots on July 1.

AFP

Mongolia capital calm as emergency rule ends

ULAN BATOR—TROOPS BEGAN pulling back from the streets of the Mongolian capital on Saturday and political leaders called for calm ahead of the lifting of emergency rule that was declared after rioting over alleged election fraud.

There was no sign of the tension that gripped the capital, Ulan Bator, just a few days ago, when some marauding mobs set fire to ruling party's headquarters on fire in a night of violence that killed five people and prompted the president to declare emergency rule for the first time in Mongolia's history.

"The political parties do not want unrest and violence," said S. Ogonbayar, chair of the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP).

"The primary task at this moment is to keep people quiet and bring back normalcy."

Workers were shovelling charred debris out of the MPRP's headquarters and authorities had erected a fence around the scorched building that stands as a reminder of the riot on Tuesday that was a rare outpouring of political violence.

But the seeming pretense was light in Ulan Bator, with families enjoying the sunshine and tourists snapping photographs in the city's main square.

All parties were to hold meetings later on Saturday to discuss the request over last week's elections, which has delayed the formation of a government and dampened hopes for action to tackle double-digit inflation and pass mining agreements.

The opposition Democratic Party was alleging fraud and pressing for rerounting and a possible re-vote in seven constituencies, after preliminary results showed the MPRP won a clear majority in the 76-seat parliament, or Great Hural.

The election commission said final results would likely not come until Monday at the earliest.

International observers say the vote in the country that shook off decades of Soviet influence and staged its first democratic elections in 1990 was largely free and fair.

If irregularities were confirmed or breaches of the law confirmed, there should be recounting first, and then if there is intimidation, a revote," said Ogonbayar.

"We were hit in those elections. We are not afraid of revoting or recounting whatsoever." Reuters

Iran responds to big powers' nuke offer, says it's ready to deal

TEHRAN—IRAN IS READY TO negotiate with world powers on its nuclear program but without suspending its controversial uranium-enrichment work, the government spokesperson said on Saturday.

"Iran will not go back on its rights on the nuclear issue," Gholamhossein Elham said, in the first comments from Tehran since it handed over a response on Friday to an international bid to end the nuclear standoff.

"The will of the Iranian people is firm and will continue to follow the path previously defined by the supreme guide (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei)," the spokesperson said at a weekly news conference.

"Any basis on negotiations [with world powers] while respecting its rights and avoiding any loss of international rights," he said, referring to Tehran's refusal to give up its nuclear enrichment.

Iran on Friday delivered its response to a package drawn up by six world powers offering Iran technology and negotiations if it suspends uranium enrichment, which the West fears could be used to make atomic weapons.

Elham said his country was prepared to hold talks "reportedly with the 5+1 Group" of the UN Security Council members plus Germany "on the common points in the Iranian package and the offer of the world powers."

Iran's top nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili said his country had submitted a "constructive and positive" response with "a focus on common ground," but he did not elaborate on the contents.

Iran has also put forward its own more all-embracing offer aimed at solving world problems, including the nuclear issue, and has said there is common ground between the two proposals.

There has been considerable speculation in recent days that Tehran was softening its tone on the nuclear standoff, although the international community has made negotiations conditional on enrichment suspension.

AFP

16 civilians killed in US strike, says Afghan gov

ASHORAD, AFGHANISTAN—An Afghan provincial governor said on Saturday 16 civilians including women, children and drivers were killed by US-led coalition air strikes but the Nato-led force denied the dead were civilians.

The strikes were on Friday in the remote district of Waygal in the mountainous northeast province of Nuristan, about 30 km from the border with Pakistan.

Provincial Governor Tamim Nurestani said that 15 civilians were killed as they were travelling out of the area after being told by security forces to leave ahead of an operation.

"The casualties were all civilians. They included two women, two children and workers and drivers of the vehicles carrying supplies," Nurestani said AFP. Two drivers and a female nurse were also dead, he said.

"Altogether 16 people, all civilians, were killed," he said. Seven other people—all men—were injured in the strike by attack helicopters, the governor said.

District governor Ghulbahruddin said on Friday that 11 civilians had been killed in the strike.

The coalition said Friday and again Saturday that the dead were militants who had been attacking an Nato-led military base in the rugged area.

Troops on the ground observed "militants" carrying the arms after firing on the outpost, it said in a statement Saturday. AFP

Rice 'proud' of Iraq invasion

WASHINGTON—US SECRETARY of State Condoleezza Rice said on Friday she was "proud" of the US decision to invade Iraq and said the Middle East had improved since President George W. Bush took office.

In an interview with Bloomberg television, Rice also cited progress in North Korea and China as evidence that the Bush administration, which has just seven months left in office, had made strides over the past eight years.

"I am proud by the decision of this administration to overthrow Saddam Hussein. I am proud of the liberation of 25 million people," Rice said in the interview aired earlier in the week.

"Iraq has been very tough. Tougher than any of us had dreamed. We can never replace the people who have been lost. We can never do anything to soothe the pain of the family and friends that they have left behind, but we are seeing a change in Iraq for the better," she said.

The interview aired as the United States marked the Independence Day holiday. The US military has lost 4,113 personnel since the March 2003 invasion, according to independent website www.icasualties.org.

"In the post-9/11 environment, you would not let a threat to grow more. I know that great historical moment to go through—difficult phases and others emerge with the world left for the better."

Rice said Iran had suffered "setbacks" and al-Qaida was "on its heels," while democracy had made a "breakthrough" with women voting in Kuwait, Afghanistan, Lebanon emerging in the Palestinian territories and "a democracy at the center of the Arab world is rising."

"We're now beginning to see that perhaps it's not so popular to be a suicide bomber. We're beginning to see that perhaps people are questioning whether Osama bin Laden ought to really be the face of Islam," she said.

Rice also said progress was being made on North Korea's nuclear disarmament, and that the North Koreans were "putting themselves out of the business of making plutonium."

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Que roars to three-shot golf triumph /A23

Sunday SPORTS

Editor Rodolfa S. Mañebo Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Odiaa Website www.inquirer.net/sports

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Warriors, Tams roll back foes

HEROES of the UP Dance Troupe perform during the opening ceremony of the UAAP yesterday.

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By Jasmine W. Paya

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST flashed its familiar dominance early then relied on Elmer Espiritu in the final stretch to turn back a rallying University of Santo Tomas for a 78-73 triumph at the start of the 71st UAAP men's basketball season yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Espiritu knocked down seven straight points capped by a right baseline jumper in the last 20.3 seconds that pushed the Warriors ahead, 76-69, after the Tigers had threatened at 69-68.

"We had a hard time because every time they missed a basket, (Jerwyn Cruz was there to get the offensive rebound)," said Warriors coach Bindo Pumaren.

Diddy a step slower, Cruz found his rhythm late in the game to finish with a game-high 16 points and 21 rebounds.

Cruz, last season's Most Valuable Player, came off the bench as the starter injuries on his hamstring and ankle.

Powered by Eastern, University also fired up its pre-season billing as sophomore Jeric Teodoro buried a triple with 16.1 seconds left to lift the Tamaraws past the Adamson Falcons, 74-71, in the first game.

Teodoro's basket came as sealed by Mark Bravo to capped a rally that trailed a 68-65 deficit to a 72-71 advantage.

"We're lucky that we were able to execute in the last minute," said FEU coach Glenn Capacio.

Espiritu, a high-leaping big man on his last year with UE, finished a rebound-dunk of a double-double-18-with-15 numbers and nine boards.

Jesse Tratis also added 11, while Harry Arellano collected 11 points, seven rebounds and seven assists for the Warriors, who are aiming to rebound from last season's tough campaign that saw them losing to the La Salle Green Archers in the championship series of an unbeatable 16-game eliminations sweep.

Red Tiresmiler Gapacion with 21 points and six rebounds, while Barroca added 12 for the Tamaraws.

Impressive

Espiritu, who scored all of his five points in the last 20 seconds, also nailed two free throws that earlier pushed the Tamaraws within a point, 70-71.

"He's really quarter-hunting for us, his offense is secondary," said Capacio of the 20-year old Filipino-German. "(Elmer's importance is in a young age, he's already showing his leadership."

The Tigers shot eight points, on coming from Cruz, in a run that trimmed the margin to 68-69, from a 64-53 with 4:14 minutes left in the final term.

Thirds took charge in an early scoring 18 margin, falling 32 of the Warriors' last 38 points in the second quarter to extend a slim 33-30 margin to 50-39 at halftime.

Nick Andrews on the Strag end, the Warriors moved to their biggest lead, 63-49, late in the third quarter.

"We're similar, but we played good defense," said Pumaren.

Benedict Fernandez took the second of his two free throws off a Jerish Cañada foul to give the Tamaraws a four-point buffer, 74-71, in the last 0.2 seconds.

The Tamaraws opened Falcons, playing under returning mentor Leo Austria, pulled ahead at 65-66 from a 53-55 standoff behind Michael

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Barako take one last shot

It's semis or quarters as Red Bull battles Sta. Lucia

By Cobbitt Tapas

IT'S AN INTRIGUING SCENARIO which Red Bull fans must contend with.

The Barako take another shot at sealing an outright semifinal berth against Sta. Lucia today in the Inter-Hilo Floors Conference in the action here in Pasay City.

While Red Bull, with a 10-7 card, takes the floor at 4:30 p.m., three teams—Barako, Alaska and Coca-Cola—are hoping for a Sta. Lucia win that would pave the way for a playoff for the remaining No. 2 slot in the semis.

If Red Bull loses, the Barako will be relegated to the quarterfinals, while the winners of the Glordeo and Alaska match for the 8:30 p.m. game will meet the Tigers in a playoff for the second semifinal slot.

Glordeo, Alaska and Coke have opposite opponents than Magnolia and Red Bull in the event that all of them finish at 10-8.

But a victory by the Barako will limit the Glordeo-Alaska bonds into a playoff for a quarterfinal slot with the loser finding themselves in a knockout match against the Beermen in the subsequent phase, which will also involve Talk-N' Text and Purefoods.

"Our game is really important...because the loser drops to the wildcard," said Glordeo coach Jong Uichico, whose wards trained in consolation with a 111-99 smoking of the Pelicans' Eugene Hilario eight.

"Every team is trying to avoid the wildcard."

Coca-Cola and Magnolia are the already assured of quarterfinal slots.

PAWN Cognion of Glordeo tussles in a layup against Alex Compton of Welcoat (right). The Kings defeated the Dragons, 111-99, Friday.

The Barako lost their first chance of joining Alaska in the semis Friday night after bowing to Talk-N Text by 110-103 clubbangan.

But coach Yeng Guiao believes there are many reasons that still keep the Barako and board today among them is their stunning streak of six straight semifinal appearances.

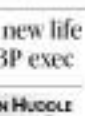
"We take pride in that. It's a tribute to the team in general and to their head coach despite us not being the highest paying team," Guiao said.

"We want to maintain that semi tiered despite the loss of key players and injuries."

Amazing new life for ex-SBP exec

I WAS A BIT surprised to hear last year that ex-SBP executive director Pato Gregorio at a dinner hosted by Soler for newly crowned WBC lightweight champion Manny Pacquiao at the Greek Theatre hotel last Friday night.

IN HUDDLE



Abbi Cebu

Many thought that Gregorio, who had been in touch with Soler over the past few months, had been hired by the boxing promoter to help him oversee Pacquiao's career.

Not so, it turned out.

OLYMPIAD QUALIFIER

Villamayor, Gomez share chess lead; Laylo shocks So

By Rex Luarca

GRANDMASTER DARWIN LAYLO upset top seed GM Wesley So to share the limelight with pacesetters GM Buenaventura "Bong" Villamayor and International Master John Paul Gomez in the fifth round of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines qualifying tournament for the Chess Olympiad at the Mandaluyong City Hall.

Laylo bested So, the country's top player based on the recent Elo quarterly ratings, after 53 moves of the Queen's Indian to improve to 3.0 points and stay within sight of Villamayor and Gomez, who have 4.5 points each.

Villamayor trounced National Master Edmundo Garsa in 45 moves of the Pirc, while Gomez whipped NM Roel de la Cruz in 36 moves of the Sicilian Maroczy to leave their bid for the Philippine team competing in the 38th Chess Olympiad in Dresden, Germany in November.

In the sixth round, Villamayor takes on So, who got stuck at 2.5 points, while Gomez meets NM Jerry Hubilo.

Other fifth round results saw IM Ronald Bancod, CM Jayson Gonzales, IM Rolando Nolte and IM Chito Garma handle their rivals in the 17-round qualifier.

Bancod, who topped the semifinal round held in the same venue last month, trounced Sheen in 31 moves of the Colle system to improve to 3.5 points in the company of NM Leonardo Caelian, who split the point with Hubilo in 36 moves of the Ruy Lopez.

Gonzales humbled slumping GM Mark Paragua in 36 moves of the Queen's opening to raise his score to three points, the same total posted by NM Rolando Nolte, IM Chito Garma and Laylo.

Nolte, the pride of Jose, Iloilo, downed Garsa in 53 moves of the Exchange Grunfeld while Garma outplayed NM Jerry Hubilo in 56 moves of the Sicilian.

Former UST standout Shercile Cua bested Lorena see Jan Joellen Peranda in 44 moves of the French to grab the sole lead in the women's division with 3.5 points in four rounds.

Catherine Perena drew with Shelly Cua in 58 moves of the Catalan to stay in second place with three points.

'Agent Zero' hits town

VISA UNITED'S INJURED SUPERSTAR ELBEST Ahmad arrived yesterday to begin his promotional tour for the Adidas Performance line. Arenas is scheduled to watch the UAAP game between Ateneo hosts Ateneo and La Salle at the Araneta Coliseum today. The high-scoring guard will also make numerous mall appearances and do interviews with the media. Roger Maycalo

Que sizzles with 65, roars to three-shot golf triumph

By Mazong R. Castillo

LIPA CITY—RIDING THE WAVE OF a brilliant week, Angelo Que shot a two-over 74 and a two-round total of 140 yesterday to run away with the ICTSI Ahmad Shakarayan Championship for his second major win of the season.

The 20-year-old Philippine Open winner hit 18 birds, who will compete in the British Open two weeks from now, and saved many bows his pursuers early with his eagle-aided closing round giving him a 20-under 268 tally and a three-shot win.

"I'm ready," Que told the victorious immediately after the victory relating to his wins to the world's most prestigious national championship at Royal Birkdale on July 17-20. "It was important for me to finish strong and keep my competitive edge.

"Because when I go there (London) on Wednesday there is no way for me to play a competitive round," Que added.

Wheal Attiamonsi also fired a 66 but the Thailand Thai amateur ace who won in Nagoyay two months ago at the expense of Que and Mars Pucar couldn't go lower when he had to and finished second at 273.

"I said it yesterday he (Que) won't make many errors on this course," the baby-faced ruling Thai star said after collaging some lady fans for photographs. "He was great. Never gave us a chance."

Marvin Dumanlas, the spearhead of the JCP team that finished way behind the Amjaosan 3rd Thai squad in the 2004 Palos Cup, clubbed up his bows finish on a par-after a 66 gave him a 273 total for solo third place.

Ambassadors Professionals' added another the tournaments purveyor applied by Que to the day's final putting, scoring home with a level 72 after three subpar rounds to finish eight shots behind in fourth as he was down at 276. He was in second place but a shot off the lead at the start of the day.

Que's victory marked the second time that a Filipino won the second swaging of this Asian Tour, Callaway-backed leg over this premier layout which also hosted the 2005 Philippine Open won by Adam Le Vesconte of Australia.

Paraog who won here last year remounded from a third round 75 with a 71 and finished with a 281 level like Filipinos Dylan Ramos (68), Randy Garside (71), Benito Magada (73) and joint second round leader Jay Bayron (72).

Que, who won $18,126, played largely free for the first time this week, bludging his somehow hole in the first three rounds, the 12th, to touch off a four-under-par run before getting a double on eight 3 on the par-5, 364-yard 14th hole.

Tournament favorite Jade Pigeonex finished at 286 after a closing 73.

ANGELO Que (center) receives his trophy during the awarding ceremony where he was joined by (from left) runner-up Wisan Jaraganon of Thailand, Ms. Malaysian chair Antonio Tarrubia, ICTSI PR manager Nana Soriano, Mercedes Benz Tour executive director Ramon Huan and PR. Malaysian director Miss Cao.

The Top Field scores (Filipinos unless noted):

268—G. Que 70-62-66-70; 273—W. Attiamonsi (Thai) 69-68-75-66; 276—M. Gonzales 71-68-71-70; J. Bayron 68-71-70-67; 279—R. Magbanua 70-69-72-68; 280—M. Ilhot 69-73-71-67; C. Bonilla 73-68-71-68; 281—C. Ramos 71-71-71-68; R. Pena 71-68-71-71; C. Garcia 71-68-71-71; B. Magada 71-69-67-74; 282—R. Ramos (Am) 68-71-71-72; P. Ambassandhu (Thai) 71-71-69-71; 283—A. Tangkulpad (Thai) 69-71-72-71; J. Dagohoy 72-68-69-74; 284—J. Rodriguez 70-69-72-73; C. Vergara (Am) 72-70-71-71; 285—C. Lo 68-73-74-70; J. Pagenas 73-74-69-70; P. Palabrica 69-69-73-74; R. Paguirigan 71-69-73-73; 287—J. Ibanez 71-73-70-73; C. Jimenez 70-69-74-74; 288—J. Ruiz 73-71-69-75; F. Rubio 73-68-71-76.

Now showing: No. 1 hoop rivalry

By Jasmine W. Payo

THERE ONE SIMPLY NEVER bores. Reigning UAAP champion La Salle and preseason favorite Ateneo debut in the UAAP stage were today sizzling starring another encounter.

"It's always going to be rough," said Blue Eagles coach Norman Black.

"Before I started coaching Ateneo, I used to watch the Ateneo-La Salle games. And one thing I noticed is never really mattered who had the most talent or who's favored to win. The only thing that mattered was what happened in that particular game."

"I think it will be the usual Ateneo-La Salle classic game. It's going to be fun to watch," said La Salle's 11-year mentor Franz Pumaren.

The Green Archers kick off their title defense against the Blue Eagles at 4 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum, right after host UP and NU tangle at 2 p.m.

Expected to grace the typically star-studded gallery are newly crowned lightweight champion Manny Pacquiao and NBA star Gilbert Arenas, who arrived in the country yesterday for his four-day Philippine sojourn.

"Our rotation right now is not what you will call a familiar seasoned rotation," said Pumaren as the Archers deal with the departure of key cogs TY Tang and Ervin Villanueva.

Rowel shooting guard JR Cruz, who's coming off a hand injury and veteran Ren Hawkins are all but the Archers, who battled the University of the East Warriors' unbeaten run to capture the 2007 men's basketball crown.

The Eagles, who finished last third place last year, will be powered by senior shooter Chris Tiu and big man Nonoy Baclao. Former NCAA Junior MVP Ryan Buenafe leads their elite freshman class.

"I think we have a better team this year," said Black.

Last season, the two powerhouse squads clashed in a rare five-game duel that saw an average winning margin of less 2.6 points.

Despite winning only twice, the Archers triumphed when it mattered the most as both the twice-to-beat advantage and the the last championship both.

MARC Agunin (left) of Ateneo drives hard to the basket against Rol Cervantes of FEU during their UAAP showdown yesterday. (See story on A21) EDDIE GARCIA

Hot-shooting Jazul chosen week's best

GAMES MONDAY (Araneta Coliseum)

7:30 p.m.—CEU vs. JRU (m)

2 p.m.—CEU vs. JRU (w)

4 p.m.—PEU vs. Mapua (m)

By Cedrik F. Tupas

LESTHAN CLIFFORD RJ JAZUL emerged as the top individual player a week into NCAA Season 84 by steering the Knights to back-to-back victories and into the early lead in the country's oldest collegiate basketball league.

One of the veterans tipped to lead the Knights to the championship in the 1984, the 5-foot-11 Jazul from Pasay City lived up to his billing by averaging 25 points, six rebounds, six assists and four steals in two games.

His best performance came in the Knights' 88-75 crushing of its Bendita Friday when he carried the Filipinos for a career-best 27 points, spiked by 7-of-13 shooting from beyond the arc as the Cuneta Astrodome.

Jazul kept the heights in the game with 24 free-half points as the hot-shooting Illinois threw used to pull away early in contest to the face of Cantonese ball court points.

The win lacked the Blazers' rare game victory run.

"I was surprised with my performance because I never scored more than 23 points before," said Jazul, who was selected NCAA Press Corps player of the week.

"I really didn't notice, I just let it fly and I didn't mind really if it goes in or not because my main focus is to play defense," added Jazul, who edged San Sebastian's Jim Viray and St. Benilde's Archie David, Anjelo Monteverde and Jacob Mendaja for the weekly honors.

Taguig makes Liga finals

ERICK RODRIGUEZ DARE through with 17 points and Marvin Dilliguen is added 15 as Hard Taguig Batang Global ended the Quezon-Sual Sisters' giant-killing ways with a 80-72 victory in Liga Filipinas Tour elimination phase at the CP Tinga gym.

Wishman Mirwan against four losses, the Batang Global, who shot 53 percent and controlled the boards, 36-32, advanced into the final of the northern leg against the winner of the other semifinal match pitting the Lipa Bandera against the Bacolod Pampanga Buddies.

Ronnie Matias added 12 points for Taguig, which outfitted its third place in the three Sur tip-in Wade 1, while Rommy Williams let Quezon (2-7) with 20 points and six rebounds.

Taguig came out blazing from the onset, racing to a 28-12 first quarter and never letting up against a team which struggled offensively and turned the ball over 20 times from which the Batang Global translated to 26 points.

The Batang Global also dominated 32 three-point shots compared to the Red Sisters' 1-of-13 shooting from beyond the arc.

The scores:

TAGUIG (80)—Rodriguez 7; Dilliguen 15; Matias 12; Aure 11; Bautista 8; Mercado 9; Sabanbalan 2; Reyes 0; Fabiola 3; Llabres 0; Bautista 2; Arcilla 1; Gonzales 0; Garcia 0; Agbayani 2; Oliveros 4; Ramos 4; Santos 2; Mendoza 0; Cuenca 0; Abad 0; Martinez 0; Pe 0; Tan 0; Villanueva 0; Mirwan 4; Williams 6

Sunday SPORTS

MICHAEL Phelps cuts an imposing figure in the ongoing US swimming trials, breaking two world records as he begins his bid to break Mark Spitz's record of seven Olympic golds in Beijing. (See story below)

Federer, Nadal go at it once more

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND—ROGER VS. RAFA IS COMING SOON TO A GRASS court near London.

Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are headed to Center Court for their third straight Wimbledon final, with one trying to control his amazing winning streak on grass and the other attempting to win his first Grand Slam title on a surface other than clay.

"It's a huge thrill every time when I get to another Wimbledon final," said 12-time major champion Federer, who stretched his winning streak at the All England Club to 48, a run that includes the last five Wimbledon titles. "It's a great occasion."

Both Federer and four-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal easily advanced through the semifinals Friday. Federer outplayed Mario Ancic, 6-2, 7-6 (3), 6-4, while a nearly flawless performance, and Nadal later defeated Nature Schuettler, 6-1, 7-6 (5) 6-4.

In Sunday's final, Nadal will be trying to become the first man since Bjorn Borg in 1980 to win the French Open and Wimbledon titles in the same year, while Federer will be trying to surpass Borg by winning a sixth straight Wimbledon title.

The only man to win six is now nine-Pete Sampras in the 1990s, and he had to win only one match to defend his titles.

"He was in the finals every time, so it was a little bit easier for him to win six in a row," said Nadal, who also won six straight matches on grass. "It feels different for me."

On Saturday, Venus and Serena Williams will play to their third Wimbledon final, but first since 2003. Venus is a four-time champion at the All England Club, but she lost to younger sister Serena in both the 2003 and '05 finals.

The Williams sisters will also play for the women's doubles title, joining forces to face Lisa Raymond of the United States and Samantha Stosur of Australia in the final.

Roberto Bautista Nadal in the last two Wimbledon finals, but the second-ranked Spaniard made it close last year, pushing the regards to five sets before finally succumbing.

Nadal may have humbled Federer in last month's French Open, winning, 6-1, 6-3, 6-0, for his third straight final victory over Federer at Roland Garros, but he doesn't necessarily think that makes him the favorite Sunday.

"Right now, I know how on the other side of the net the best player of the world—Roger Federer—but I will try my best and we will see," said the Spaniard, who is on a 23-match winning streak. "I feel I have to play very well if I want to have chances to win."

AP

FEDERER A great occasion

NADAL I will try my best

Dope-hit Tour de France kicks off minus top stars

BREST, FRANCE—THE THREE-WEEK TOUR de France starts Saturday with organizers hoping to win cycling's most prestigious race by restoring the finish line without any doping scandals.

Drug use and cheating in recent years have depleted the ranks of many of cycling's biggest names, giving a new crop of would-be stars a chance to make their names.

Cadel Evans, Alejandro Valverde, Carlos Sastre, Iban Mayoz and Damiano Cunego are seen among the most likely contenders to win the three-week race that takes riders over more than 3,500 kilometers (2,179 miles).

"I'd rate myself as a pretty good chance as any," said Evans, who has progressively improved from an eighth-place finish in 2006, to fourth the next year and runner-up in 2007. One sign of his potential rise stays? He now has the same bodyguard that Lance Armstrong once had.

The race begins with a 197.5-kilometer (122.7 mile) flat ride through Brittany for the first time since 1967. The Tour will begin without an opening-day prologue.

It also starts without a defending champion for the second straight year. The name of 2007 winner Alberto Contador—Arsenal—stand instead because of doping scandals in the last two years. American Floyd Landis was stripped of his 2006 title after testing positive for synthetic testosterone.

Among other big names out this year are Kazakhstan's Alexander Vinokourov—who was removed from the Tour last year for a positive test for a blood transfusion which led to the ouster of his entire Astana team—and former rider Armstrong, now 7-time Tour champion Frankie Ivan Leopheimer.

The 2006 Giro d'Italia winner and two-time Tour podium finisher Ivan Basso is also absent, but once the race starts, people will stop talking about them and start talking about Basso who ain't here," said Patrice Lerbret, head of Tour organizer Amaury. AP

Phelps breaks another mark; Torres makes big comeback

OMAHA, NEBRASKA—Michael Phelps set another world record to win the 200-meter individual medley and Dara Torres capped an improbable comeback by making her first Olympic team in 24 years at the US Olympic swimming trials Friday.

Phelps claimed his fourth individual victory of the trials in 1 minute, 54.80 seconds, beating the mark of 1:54.86 he set while winning seven events at last year's world championships in Australia.

"I just tried to hang on," he said. "I was having that last 50."

It was the second world record of the meet for Phelps, who now has more than anyone in history to win the 400 IM. He only piece of unfinished business: the 100 butterfly and an expected showdown with world record holder Ian Crocker.

Phelps swam fresh five or several in that event Saturday night to ensure he swims eight events at the Olympics. Then he'll need to win them all to beat Mark Spitz's record of seven gold medals at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Spitz believes the 23-year-old from Baltimore has a good chance to take down the Holy Grail of Olympic records. He spent three free years ago, winning six golds and two bronzes at the Athens Games.

"It's time for someone else to take the baton of responsibility," Spitz said.

Now 41 and with a 2-year-old daughter, Torres completed four Olympic comeback by making the US team for the 100 freestyle.

Wearing goggles older than some of her competitors, Torres got off to a blazing start and guarded her lead on the Rebecca swimming to win in 53.70, beating out Natalie Coughlin's 53.83. Cheering her on in the stands was Shiwas, who was in her mother's arms at the awards ceremony.

Torres, who made her Olympic debut at the 1984 Los Angeles Games, has taken several first competitive swimming. A nine-time medalist, she already was the first US swimmer to make four Olympic teams.

"I'm ecstatic. I can't believe it," Torres said.

Overshadowed by Phelps and Torres, Aaron Peirsol gained a measure of revenge for his upset loss at the 2007 world championships, tying the world record in the 200 backstroke and beating teammate Ryan Lochte.

The race never made for under the wheelchair, but Peirsol lunged to the wall just ahead of Lochte to win in 1:54.32, equaling the mark set by Lochte at the last worlds. AP

TORRES win daughter Tessa

Sunday BIZ

IN THIS ISSUE
Fresh grads turn to brewing in Los Baños /B3
36-year-old shirt brand gets new look /B4

JP AUTO GAS company truckers encouraging taxi owners to convert to LPG system gas dispensers and pollution in Baguio City

Big fuss over autogas

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—TWENTY YEARS ago, Joseph Ilve and his brother Philip Uy put up a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) station and service facility here for motor vehicles.

But their business failed.

"Gasoline was cheap so people saw no point in converting to LPG," he says. Yesterday pensioners and taxi cops, JP Auto Gas Co. (JPAG) came back with the same idea. And this time, the situation is very different.

LPG is now almost half the price of gasoline and the world is reeling from the effects of oil shortages that has been jacking up the price of oil. Business has been much better than in 1988 for the Ilves.

Now about 80 orders have been received to autogas (LPG used for motor vehicles) in Baguio.

From their small station on Kiamos Highway, JPAG plans two more stations on Magsaysay Ave. (in the La Union area) and in Barangay Military Cut-Off near the central business district.

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EAST TOWER

Surging costs catch up with corporate America

BOSTON—US MANUFACTURERS ARE turning to price increases as their only way to offset record high energy bills and surging raw material costs, insisting that the risk of losing some sales is worth preserving profit margins.

The moves are a sign that companies are running out of room to offset the rise in key costs including oil, natural gas, steel and aluminum, while betting their customers will have little choice but to accept higher prices.

Manufacturers including Kraft Foods Inc. and Dishwasher Corp. over the past month have told investors they plan to raise prices.

"Companies are definitely getting more aggressive in terms of raising prices," said Kurt Spieler, a fund manager at the Fort Collins, Colorado-based Pitch Point Growth Opportunities Fund, whose key industrial holdings include 3-D Corporation and Illinois Tool Works Inc., Ing Global and Agco Corp.

"Initially they tried to manage their profitability through productivity improvements, becoming more efficient, some cost cutting. But now with the extent of the rise in raw material costs, that's just not sufficient," Spieler said. "The interesting part will be how much the prices that they're increasing will stick in a pretty tough economic environment."

The question of whether price increases will stick—and will be passed to quickly enough—was one that haunted investors in United Parcel Service Inc., the world's largest package delivery company, and its rival US Freightways Corp. last month. Both companies cut their profit forecasts, citing higher oil prices, and analysts reacted the fuel surcharges the companies were imposing did not seem to be coming to fast enough to offset their expensive energy costs.

NO ONE is spared from the adverse effects of runaway oil prices. In London, police stand guard to crush drivers protests against backpricks by blocking the A40 Westway road. Hasbro drives into the center of London to lobby parliament over the cost of fuel and to plead for a cut in diesel duties. REUTERS

'Get it in price'

Harsco, a maker of trucks and engines, has looked to its pricing on steel and its revenue through the rest of this year, said chief executive David Gruber. The company expects its energy bills to go up again next year, and to offset that, he said it will have to raise prices as well as look for ways to trim other costs. To justify higher prices to customers, Kennametal will offer more fuel efficient products that will save them money in the long run.

"Commodities are a challenge for the entire country and certainly in the machining industry," Gruber told investors on Monday. "The real answer to it ... is get it to price." Sweitzer is not alone in bracing for more cost pressures. A survey by consultancy BDM McCluskey of 912 manufacturing and distribution companies, which will be released next week, found that more than 90 percent expected energy raw materials and shipping costs to rise at least 6 percent over the course of the year.

"We continue to experience headwinds in our manufacturing costs that impact progress against our productivity targets," said Kraanen, who heads Goodyear's North American tire operations, told investors. "We continue to attack all of our costs aggressively. There's a lot of things we can do in the factories to take variable labor [costs] out, to take actions around energy," Kraanen said.

Hot tires line first

Goodrich plans to raise prices on its fire trucks, concrete mixers and other large vehicles 3 percent to 5 percent, while look capital spending and look for other ways to cut costs to cope with higher energy and steel prices.

"We haven't had significant pushback from customers, our competitors seem to be similarly increasing prices," Robert Bohn, Goodrich's CEO, told investors last week.

Goodrich's competitors include Kennametal, Federal Signal Corp., and Terex Corp.

But any close a businesses raises prices it runs the risk of losing sales. The fact that companies are finding it hard to keep up gents they may be looking to protect profit margins in the face of a slowing US economy.

"Just as the perceptions of consumers can affect their spending decisions, the confidence of manufacturers can certainly have an impact on their behavior," said Michael Goodman, director of economic and public policy research at the University of Massachusetts' Isenberg Institute.

"In a different economic environment, someone might take a less leader to gain market share or to open up a new avenue of business. But the willingness to do something like that is going to be directly related to confidence."

Reuters

Some Americans will drive trucks, no matter the cost

CLARISSA Muñoz (2nd left) helps to throw cleaning supplies from Leana Baldwin's Chevrolet Suburban. REUTERS

LAWRENCEBURG, IND., —SEVen runners pile out of a massive white Chevrolet Suburban and unload the raincoats, maps and buckets of their trade. Gasoline may soar $4 a gallon, but the Chevy's driver and business owner Leana Baldwin has no intention of downsizing to a small-er vehicle.

"I love my Suburban. I don't like paying for the gas, but it simplifies my life," said Baldwin, who bought the used 7,000 pound SUV two years ago for her cleaning business and hasn't looked back.

As many Americans abandon SUVs and light trucks for more fuel-efficient vehicles, analysts and auto makers alike are scrambling to gauge how low ownership will go—and just who will remain die-hard drivers of SUVs, pickups and minivans.

"There's always going to be a certain market for these vehicles—large families, people towing loads or horses. They have a purpose, and only recently became a substitute for passenger vehicles," Jaimendas Gross, an analyst at Cambridge Energy Research Associates.

Baldwin represents one core constituency of truck and SUV owners—business owners who cannot do without the cargo space, towing capacity or strength of a big vehicle.

The petite mother of three uses the seven seaters to ferry clients and offices of some 70 clients. She's wired using two cars to transport workers and gear, but it didn't work. One carload might some have and do two work. The second drives to pick up her part crews. Workers bothered more.

Plus, the big Chevy with its three rows of seating and wide barn doors at the back loads and unloads easily—a feature that allows the workers, three vacuum cleaners and assorted gear to disperse with military precision at hourly intervals.

Baldwin puts about half a tank of gas in the vehicle every week—it costs $75 last time around—and drives about 40 miles a day shuttling between work sites.

Sustained pain

"Having it was the best thing I ever did," Baldwin said.

Most Autolcate drove cars until just a few years ago, and only shifted recently to as-

SEE PAGE B6

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Big fuss over autogas

From page B1

JMAC is targeting gasoline-fed vehicles because there is no need to modify the engine to combine gasoline and LPG.

Fly says they come up with a financial plan for drivers to convert to autogas. The operation costs from P12,000 to P28,000.

After conversion, the vehicle would seem to lagging at the trunk (or at the back passenger area for FX vehicles) as autogas cylinder tank of from 50 to 66 liters.

But one usually can only use cylinder in a day. Was said an autogas user giving 6,000 kilometers per month would have almost P12,000 savings compared to a gasoline-fed taxi.

About P450 is included for maintenance cost savings because the engine would become more efficient and there would be almost no carbon buildup, he said.

"In three months, one can already recover the autogas conversion cost," said Mec.

Federico Dandayan, Department of Transportation and Communications director to Cordillera, says still the stricter exhaust emission laws, going autogas is one alternative.

He says various swelling of franchises can be guaranteed two more years (from 10 to 12 years) of operation if they convert to LPG.

"Autogas is part of the Clean and Green programs so this is very much welcome," he says.

Mec says there is no truth that vehicles fed on autogas cannot climb uphill roads, which are common in the city. "There may be a maximum of 3- to 5-percent decrease but powers but this is hardly noticeable," he says.

He says they still have to have a user of an autogas cylinder exploding. He explains there are pressure valves to prevent from blasting and the steel used is thicker than a gas tank.

Autogas is cleaner than ordinary LPG used for cooking as they cannot be more changeable, he says.

He says autogas has the same amount of particulates that gasoline and is far cleaner than diesel in this aspect. It also has less nitrogen oxide, hydrocarbon deposits and carbon monoxide than both diesel and gasoline.

JMAC has also marshalled its groups for motorcycles which they have been looking on Baguio roads for a year now.

Healthy breakfast advocacy kicks off

From page B9

methods were exhibited in an educational and entertaining manner how they can get their kids to eat and enjoy healthy breakfast and include whole grains in their diet.

This community-based program was implemented in all of Marikina's 16 barangays. The sessions were led by the City Health Office together with the Barangay health volunteers, barangay health officials and other barangay officials. To equip them with the knowledge of the importance of a healthy breakfast and whole grain, they underwent a barangay Heroes Training led by Dr. Trinidad Trinidad of the DOH.

These community-based activities culminated with a special program dubbed "Sinagpas Ka Muna" wherein moms were treated to a day of entertainment and pampering.

Aside from the community-based program, "Sinagpas Ka Muna" will likewise implement an information campaign in schools in cooperation with the Department of Education, Marikina Division.

There, all of the 17 public schools and 4 private schools in the city of Marikina will have "Tulong Dunong kay Tibay" sessions, a feeding Outreach Day and Adopt a Feeding Program.

In the "Tulong Dunong kay Tibay" session, school nutritionists will undergo training that will help them incorporate the knowledge of whole grains and healthy breakfast in their nutrition modules.

The Kalusugan Hotline, a text messaging, will have pupils from grades one and two undergo a program that will enhance them on the value of eating whole grain during breakfast.

Under the Adopt a Feeding Program, on the other hand, two schools from the city will receive a breakfast meal that includes Brodi! Kids Brunch from July to September. This will be done in partnership with the Department of Education, Marikina Division in support to existing feeding programs. The performance of the kids will then be measured to gauge its impact.

Fresh grads turn to brewing in Los Baños

By Nina Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—Believing that capital is not a hindrance for those geared toward entrepreneurship, three graduates of the University of the Philippines (UP) here chose to risk their own business instead of finding high-paying jobs.

Nina Angeleena, 22, Jabez Flores, 21, and Jessie Hernandez, 23, were classmates at the UP Rural High School in Los Baños.

After high school, the three parted ways and vowed they would again meet and borrow co-workers of a coffee shop.

Angeleena took a course on hotel, restaurant and institution management at UP Diliman and graduated cum laude. Flores is a sociology major at UP Los Baños, and Hernandez took his bachelor's at UP-Open University and is now a licensed nutritionist.

Now, the Los Baños branch of Café Antonio, with original branch in Dumaguete City, is a favorite hangout place of UPLB students and professors near dying for delectable coffee and food after classes.

Located less than 100 meters from the UP main gate, it has become accessible to members of the UPLB community.

Running for two months now, Café Antonio—Los Baños offers delicious blends of coffee, pasta, sandwich and pastries.

Lucky jobless

"It seemed time had crossed me as to meet," Angeleena says.

In September 2007, Angeleena resigned from her five-month work as a catering officer in an international coffee company in Ortigas while Hernandez was about to find work after the results of their board exam were released. Flores was giving so much of his time in studying coffee business and being a "barista."

A barista is a person trained in preparation of various coffee drinks.

It was Flores who was enthusiastic in putting up his own coffee shop, Angeleena says.

"Jabez was craving for it and we were very interested. But we eventually liked the thought of having our own business," she says, saying that after Flores graduated in college, he participated in the Hoey Kissi Culinary School's coffee class and the barista workshop at the Highlander Academy of Coffee in Singapore.

While the three had no jobs, a family friend of Flores asked him to help him operate coffee shop, the Café Antonio in Dumaguete City, owned by a corporation mostly composed of the Flores.

"We thought it would be a good idea to help them and also observe how to manage a coffee shop," Angeleena said.

"But we were confused after our two-month stay in Dumaguete if we would pursue the coffee shop business in Los Baños," she says.

The would-be owners thought about it for a while and questions like "How can we raise the money needed? Where is the location? How will we do it?" popped up.

Angeleena recalls that while walking along the street near UPLB campus known as Tiendesitas, they saw a vacant space, ideal for a coffee shop, a few blocks away from LB Square, one of the favorite spots for UPLB students' gimmick.

With the owner's assurance for them to decide within two months, the three partners decided to go on with their venture and started raising the needed funds.

Capital

The owners had to pay P60,000 for a three-month advance and deposit for the place. They also needed another P300,000 for the renovation, and P100,000 for rent expenses monthly.

They raised the money by asking their relatives and friends to be shareholders of the Café Antonio Corp. and promised them their investment would soon have yields.

"We should be a fish-maker but the business should be well-planned," she says. "If you're so concerned, this will be easier."

Customers' acceptance

On April 14, Café Antonio opened to the public after renovation was completed and everything needed was in place.

Flores says the community in UPLB accepted them quickly than on their first month, their shop was already crowded during peak hours (4 p.m. - 8p.m.).

People say the design of the shop attracts the customers, others also say they like the taste of the coffee.

Café Antonio's design was a combination of Spanish and modern style. They put antique-looking wallpaper made of wood and capiz on the walls. The lights are also Hispanic but there are modern touches like the counters, tables and glass door.

Flores says they wanted the shop to be a place of comfort.

"We are getting new regular customers every day. Some of them even say they leave at least thrice a week," he says.

He adds that friends like pastry and cookies really matter in the business. "It should be visually appealing."

Another mentions, Flores says, is the location. "They can't [friends] drive here, and similarly in promoting Café Antonio and as means to get feedbacks from their customers.

Café Antonio also placed a stand for books and magazines to stimulate an educational environment.

According to Angeleena, working in the owner is quite difficult because in established companies every paper work has a format, but in their own business, they have to make them ourselves.

"At this point in time, we just want to improve what we have and try to give the best service that we can give. Eventually we will be known by word of mouth," she says.

CAFE Antonio-Los Baños, a new favorite hangout place of UPLB students and teachers.

[FROM LEFT] Jabez Flores, Nina Angeleena and Jessie Hernandez

FEATURES IN BRIEF

Review for brokers set

SPARKS INSTITUTE OF REAL ESTATE ANNOUNCES THE SCHEDULES of free sections for its Comprehensive Real Estate Seminars (CREB) and reviews in Makati and Quezon City:

Saturday afternoon section will be held on July 26, Aug. 2, 9, 16 and 23, from 1 to 5 p.m. OR a.m. with special review on Sept. 20 at Mike's Restaurant, near the exit of Edsa-Ortigas 2, Ayala Center, Makati City.

Monday afternoon section will be on July 28, Aug. 4, 11, 18 and 25 with special review on Sept. 22, same time and venue; while the eleven-session Tuesday evening section will be held on July 29, Aug. 5, 12, 19, 26 and 28 with special review on Sept. 23, 6 to 10 p.m., also at the same venue in Makati City.

The Thursday afternoon section will be held at Mike's Restaurant in Gateway Mall, Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City on July 31, Aug. 7, 14, 21 and 28 with special review on Sept. 25. Be sure! Note visit at 1 to 5 or 6:45 p.m.

For details, call 88 60028 or 634 0963 or cell phone no. 0918-2281113 or 0921-6836621.

Tzu Chi RP stages fund-raising drive

FOLLOWING the immediate action of Tzu Chi Foundation's global network of volunteers in response to the tragedies that befell in Burma and Myanmar, Tzu Chi Philippines let this stream of love flowing as it staged its first fund-raising drive for the victims of China's earthquake and Myanmar's cyclone disaster, in and around the busy streets of Sta. Cruz and Binondo, Manila recently.

More than 130 volunteers went out in groups to cover almost every street and establishment in Sta. Cruz to solicit donations for the thousands of victims in the said countries. Carmen Tan, wife of business tycoon Lucio Tan, joined the group and visited every store to humbly ask for donations. As Tzu Chi volunteers to give with compassion and joy, the activity also led to educate the rich in helping them realize their blessings and share them with their less fortunate brethren.

Expo shows new F & B technologies

THE TRADENEX Institute of Manila Engineers (TIME) Foundation Inc. presents the 9th International Food and Beverage Manufacturing and Technologies Expo (ifbe) at the PSAI Convention Center at the SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City on Aug. 28-30.

Touted as the country's only trade-focused F & B manufacturing and technologies exhibition, the five-will showcase new and next-to-date technology, equipment and machinery covering the entire F & B manufacturing process.

This includes packaging, brewing, baking, packaging, storage, distribution and allied services.

The annual expo will feature an extensive line of technologies, food handling equipment, hearing companies and machinery from the industry leaders that will surely helpful to hoteliers, restaurateurs, and entrepreneurs engaged in the food business. For queries, call 6810604 or 6870565.

Minute Burger opens franchise store

MINUTE Burger, the 24-hour burger store which possesses the "Stop One, Take One" burgers, recently opened a franchise store in Meycauayan, Bulacan, as part of its expansion efforts north of Manila.

The store which is located at the center of Meycauayan's busy Pan-am street, shares all the food and try "near look" featuring its traditional orange-and-yellow facade with a slightly modern twist. Minute Burger embarked on the franchising business in 2003, banking on the company's established brand and operations.

Today, there are 60 franchisees running 130 stores mostly in Metro Manila and Metro Davao. For queries, call 776-1748 and 776-1308.

Fish processing seminar set

THE GOLDEN Treasure Skills Development Program will conduct a one-day seminar on meat and fish processing at the Kendil Building, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City on July 12, Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For questions call 09 3851 and 421 1617.

Healthy breakfast advocacy kicks off

NESTLE KIDS BRUNCH RECIPES launched its healthy breakfast campaign advocacy with the city government of Muntinlupa.

Dubbed "Hatid Sigla" Initiative in Umagal, "Hatid Sigla" promotes the value of having a healthy breakfast by taking food that are rich in whole grain.

Whole grain contains complex carbohydrates and fiber that release its energy fuel into the body all morning long, providing children the energy to stay focused, involved and get the maximum out of their school morning. Studies have also shown that whole grains can help prevent diseases such as diabetes, heart problems, certain types of cancer, and child obesity.

Realizing its many benefits and noting the lack of whole grain in the typical Filipino diet, Nestle Philippines took a major nutrition initiative by incorporating whole grains in their top consuming beverage of breakfast, Milo cereals as whole grain. And through the "Hatid Sigla" campaign, it seeks to inform the public of its many health benefits.

One of the major programs of the "Hatid Sigla" campaign is "Halong Buong Kay Nanay" which encourages mothers to take an active role in ensuring that their children get a healthy breakfast. Under the "Halong Buong Kay Nanay" session,

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Some Americans will drive trucks, no matter cost

From page B1

called "light trucks"—which include pickups, with an open truck bed behind the passenger cab; sport-utility vehicles, with an enclosed bed or cargo space; and minivans.

In 1980, just two million light trucks were sold annually, about 28 percent of new vehicle sales. By 1990, light trucks made up almost a third of sales, and by 2000 they'd overtaken cars as the preferred ride of US buyers.

Light truck sales hit a peak at 61 percent of new vehicle sales in July 2003, representing an annual sales rate of more than 12 million vehicles.

But skyrocketing oil prices have brought demand to a screeching halt. Light truck sales dropped to less than 48 percent of new vehicle sales in April and 44 percent in May—the first time they were below 50 percent since 2001. At that pace, only 6 million will be sold in 2008.

In June, sales of domestic and imported light trucks were down 19.4 percent from the same month of last year, the auto makers said on Tuesday.

The shift has created analysts.

"This really is a watershed period," said Marilyn Brown, professor of energy policy at Georgia Tech. "Consumers are no longer thinking ... We'll just start a few months and [energy] prices will go down. We're in a period of sustained pain, and people understand we've left that era of cheap energy." Ford and General Motors have both announced plans to shut truck plants and boost product of fuel-efficient cars.

Gauging the future of the SUV and truck market has become the new guessing game. While dealerships are awash with both used and new vehicles, some demand will remain.

Energy analyst Dixon thinks a way of measuring that market might be to look where it was before the bumper for horsepower, seating capacity and cupholders really took hold.

"A way to talk about it might be to look back 10 years."

That may be a level of "mass demand for a vehicle that does the kinds of things those vehicles do," said Gross.

Ten years ago, sales of light trucks were about 40 percent of new vehicle sales. While current sales are below that level, Gross said part of the recent decline is likely due to the decline in the housing and building markets, with construction workers idle, new trucks are also somewhat.

"Sales may go up again for this group when housing picks up again," Gross said.

Dallas contractor Bennie Smith, 56, is one such buyer. He also flown and drives a six-cylinder Toyota Tundra pickup.

"I can't do without a pickup. You see all the tools I got," he said, motioning to a huge metal toolbox on the back of his truck. He also pulls a trailer full of equipment, and spends between $200 and $250 a week on gasoline.

"There's no way ... I just couldn't use a little car. I need to haul off trash every time I do a job," he said.

Some recreational truck owners are just as adamant.

Arizona mortgage broker John Stephens uses his big, plum-colored Dodge RAM pickup to tow off-road vehicles out to the desert to play. He likes their comfort and space.

As for desired gallon-a-liter gallons of gas, at $4.16 a gallon for fuel in a Scottsdale gas station, Stephens said he runs premium, makes certain oscillates to improve consumption, such as driving more slowly if the government cut speed limits to save fuel, but he would not consider giving up his truck despite getting just 13 miles per gallon.

"I'd rather see more drilling and more nuclear power plants, anything to keep the price of down," he said.

Baldwin, too, is keeping her Chevy. But she admits the hulking SUV sits in her driveway on the weekends.

"It uses too much gas, so we only use it for work," she explained. "We have a smaller vehicle we use for regular" Reuters

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Sunday BIZ

36-year-old shirt brand gets new look

Second generation brings Collezione to a different level

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

JOEY QUA and Rose Sia oversee Collezione C2's re-launch a universal brand for Filipinos.

THE MY Pilipinas Collection highlights the Philippine map (lik-ol) weave and embroidered in highly wearable pieces all executed in high-quality manner.

IF YOU can wear your heart on your sleeve, why not wear your heritage as well?

IF YOU'RE IN YOUR 30s, there's a very good chance that you once owned...or still do...a Collezione shirt.

Inspired by the quality and look of the Lacoste shirt, Collezione was born in 1972 out of the belief that Filipinos deserved shirts of a similar quality but at a fraction of the cost.

Even the name has that French ring to it, partly in homage to the iconic Lacoste brand.

And for years, the gamble worked as Collezione enlivened a loyal following, mainly students and young professionals who were drawn to the classic designs of the affordable cotton shirts with the boy's logo.

But while its classic quality grew up, evolved and followed new trends, Collezione did not. It was slow to embrace change.

It kept mainly to its tried and tested, basic designs, which is why Collezione gave way to apparel brands that captured the imagination of clients with shifting tastes.

Comes now Joey Qua, only child of the founder of Collezione and a BS Management and Economics graduate of the University of Massachusetts.

After working in the US for a few years, he came home in 2000 full of ideas on how to bring the brand closer to the hearts of the young Filipinos.

Qua tells BusinessBiz that he thought the time was right to take Collezione to a new level because opportunities emerged to put up boutiques in the SM, Ayala and Robinsons malls.

He father, however, was reluctant to tinker with the formula that enabled Collezione to ride the ebb-and-flow of the Philippine economy for 36 years.

The younger Qua, thus struck out on his own, taking all it had to good with the Collezione brand and adding to it new, hip designs, packaging, merchandising and even store design.

Thus was born Collezione C2 to represent the advent of the new generation.

"My father still handles the Collezione stores in the department stores, while I take care of the Collezione C2 in the malls," Qua says. "There are now 20 Collezione C2 stores in different malls."

His admits that it has not been easy to push for changes with the "tropa" and the way the business is being run.

There was a lot of creative tension between him and his father, but the younger Qua did manage to have his way, since he did stress that what he was doing was for the good of the brand and its future.

But the 29-year-old Qua stresses that while he pushed hard for innovation and reinventing it never changed currency he did not stray from the core values of Collezione that his father nurtured.

"I learned many things from him. He taught me to be thrifty and watch finances. He was very averse to debt," Qua says.

He adds that he is proud that his father has always been a stickler for quality when it why Collezione and Collezione C2 shirts and apparel come from the same company-owned manufacturing facilities.

"He did not put up a manufacturing facility in China even if it is cheaper because he did not want to take a chance on the quality and possibility that shipments will not come in on time to fill our stores," Qua explains. "I have to hand it to him, the quality of Collezione has been superior since time immemorial."

He says this explains why it was not so difficult for his Collezione C2 to penetrate new markets by combining the quality that people have come to expect from the brand with more trendy and cutting-edge designs.

But what truly catapulted Collezione C2 into the thick of the fight in the apparel industry is the launch of its My Pilipinas Collection—a ready-to-wear line featuring the Philippine map that is either silk screened or embroidered on classic tops, open-collar shirts and blazers.

"We wanted to go beyond the idea that nationalism is confined or that only heroes can show what it's like to be patriotic," Qua says. "And we thought that fashion is one way by which we can make the concept, and hopefully, the practice, of nationalism more relevant, accessible and open for interpretation even among the new generation."

The attempt has been successful, he says, as the My Pilipinas shirts have been flying off the shelves, with buyers getting more than one to send to their family members abroad who are yearning for a piece of home.

Credit goes to Collezione C2 creative director designer Rhett Eala who managed to turn an old haberan with nationalism.

"I took us a long time to choose the right creative director. I talked to tons of designers but we chose Rhett because we had great support and I felt that he was the right person to help us make nationalism hip through fashion," he says.

He adds that Collezione C2 will not stop at just the My Pilipinas line, and plans are under way to produce even more designs and collections that will showcase Filipino pride.

"My vision is for everyone to have a My Pilipinas shirt as a way to show pride in being a Filipino," Qua says. "We also want to be the brand that's proudly Philippine-made and proudly worn by Filipinos."

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Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

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Shelter for the harried soul

STILLNESS amid lushness on the pond at Sanctuary

Tagaytay's best-kept secret is a place of solitude or bonding with loved ones

By Alan F. Vergara

BEHIND GOURMET'S CAFÉ, now a well-known Tagaytay landmark, is, ironically, Tagaytay's best-kept secret. It is known only to the harried souls.

One of the men responsible for turning Tagaytay into a weekend destination to unplug into the natural resources of the place to build a sanctuary for people stressed out or beleaguered.

Spread out a few meters behind Gourmet's Restaurant along Aguinaldo highway in Cavite—beyond a coffee-roasting facility and several hectares of land

Tagaytay's best-kept secret is a place of solitude or bonding with loved ones

Freddie's new love

By Caresia Francisco
Contributor

A pillar of Philippine broadcast industry discovers the sea

THE PORTS FUEGO YACHT CLUB (PFYC) is a haven of celebrity as sleek, powerful boats get lowered on their cradles, a cabin cruiser eases out of its berth, a fuel tanker boat zooms by.

There's also this elegant twin-hulled Catamaran that slips into the water, gracefully catching her sails, its stylized, 8.8 Wenner, Philippine flag dominating the scene.

This is "Ty Tambourgo," Freddie Garcia's latest love, a luxurious, lagoon 380 wind-powered beauty measuring 30.5 by 20.8 with four cabins underneath.

"I love the sea and I'm happiest when I'm sailing. This one is exceptional," he says, beaming as he takes control of the wheel, a pillar of Philippine broadcast industry Freddie retired a few years ago.

Most weekends find him at Ports Fuego where he has a house to anchor after a day at sea.

The new marina can now accommodate 150 boats dry dock. There are over 20 floating berths for members as more and more vessels drop anchor here, forming a new breed of boat people whose lifestyles extend to anchoring in the metropolitan seas.

There are boat communities to visit, new areas to discover, dive sites to explore, closer waters to swim in.

According to operations manager Jake Valera, executive secretary manager Sandra Gozum, all commodatory members can avail themselves of the marina services while associate members can easily activate their membership status to enjoy the marina facilities.

There is also especial visitors membership which can be sponsored by a club member.

Launched over a year ago, PFYC is now fully operational and offers a range of services for boat owners around Batangas.

Maintenance services range from boring down the boat to giving it a professional polish. There is a fuel station on site as well as an efficient towing service.

Up on a hill is the cozy Ports Fuego yacht club with a bar overlooking the premises

"I'M HAPPIEST when I'm sailing."

ELEGANT" Ty Tambourgo" sails into the sunset, its stylized "Wenner" Philippine flag leaving the wind.

FREDDIE Garcia and Club Ports Fuego executive chef Mikel Arcaia

In Chef Mikel Arcaia has created a menu of perfect, his tapas delights to go with a hearty glass of sangria.

It's perfect for that mellow rainy mood—a cup to a wonderful day at sea as the beautiful Fuego sunset yields a palette of colors on the horizon.

SPREAD of tapas or pinxtos has chorizo croquetas, fresh mussels topped with salsa, pulpo (cuttlefish marinated octopus), gambas a la roca, boletus sauteeges.

How to make your sangria

IN A PITCHER, SLICE ONE MEDIUM apple and orange and sauternes with two or three tbsp of sugar. Leave for one or two hours to ferment.

Half an hour before you serve it, pour a whole bottle of red table wine.

Pour a jigger of cointreau or orange-flavored vodka. Top off with soda or sprite.

You can freeze the sangria and serve while slightly defrosted or pour over crushed ice or ice cubes. Have some bits of fruit in bottom of the glass. Salud!

Travel Briefs

MALAYSIA'S MEGA SALE CARNIVAL WINNER
Malaysian Ambassador Dato Ahmad Rasidi Nazar (fourth from left) hands over the symbolic ticket of Malaysia Airlines to Katrina Cruz of Mega IMAGES Publications who joined the Philippine media group to the Mega Sale Carnival. The shopping event, held in key cities in Malaysia, runs until Sept. 1 and is designed to position the country as among the top shopping haven in Asia. Also present were Tourism Malaysia (TM) assistant director Abdul Rahim Haron; Malaysia Airlines area manager Mustafa Kamal; Mohd Wahida Business World High Life associate editor Judith Juanita; and The Philippine Star assistant editor Therese Jaime-Gamonas. The multi-awarded Malaysian flag carrier is a strategic partner of TM in the conduct of mega familiarization programs to promote Malaysia as a tourist destination that is "Truly Asia."

TOURISM FAIR OPENING
Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia (center), Tourism Undersecretary Oscar Poblador, Rep. Edgar Chatto of Bohol, Mactan and PITF chair Angel Ramos Rogue, Chairman Emeritus Robert Lim Joseph, and Manila Cebu Chapter Chair Jenny Francisco cut the ribbon in the opening of Philippine International Tourism Fair and Travel Market Exchange 2008 held at the Cebu International Convention Center, Mandaue City

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Shopping Center of the Year 2007

50

Shelter for the harried soul

From page A1

planned to become... St. Joseph's sanctuary offers people, whether alone or in groups, both the scene and the inner space to encounter with nature and with themselves.

The tour guy opens to a life-size image of St. Joseph—a welcoming sight to the visitor. Beyond the image roll out sloping pathways, towering trees, lush foliage. Facing the statue or interior where visitors can stay is a beautiful pond, with decks decorating its calm confines.

The three-hectare refuge also offers visitors the use of a conference room and chapel.

Ecumenical place

The chapel is ecumenical, **minus altar, but with securely** carved double doors and a rainbow-hued tile Indus and Bali.

Glass panels behind the main altar give worshippers an unimpeded view of the outdoor garden.

Simple and serene, the chapel has become like the favorite venue for masses and even non-Catholic weddings. Catholic couples must first secure the necessary documents from their parishes.)

Individuals, married couples and families can choose to stay for several nights in any of the 38 identical rooms. Each room has a mini garden and private bathroom.

Thanks to its remote location, the sanctuary is spared from noise and smog of Aguinaldo Highway. Aside from chirping birds and rustling trees, all one hears are occasional quacks from a flock of ducks frolicking in a man-made pond.

Trailblazer

The man behind is all is but nonetheless Ernest Escoler. When he opened "Gourmet's to the sea" in '80s, little did he know that his pioneering step would turn Tagaytay into a weekend destination, especially for tapsi and middle-class tourists.

He was one of the first businessmen to see the city's potential to draw the weekend lifestyle market.

Gourmet's became known for fresh salads harvested in its backyard. Escoler, in a way, helped introduce Filipino diners to healthy dining.

"Since we started growing our own organic vegetables, I decided to put up a restaurant specializing in fresh greens," he says. In three days, salad was not enough.

Through the years, Escoler expanded his leisure plantation and even runs Gourmet's inn, a brand known for its fresh greens and coffee.

The venture has also developed bottled salad dressing.

Retreat house

With the opening of alternative routes to Tagaytay, particularly the Sta. Rosa, Antipolo route now bypass Gourmet's. But Escoler insists the hotel is not worried about the lesser traffic.

The idea of building a sanctuary reached from his upbringing and his personal experiences, and not from a desire to reinvent the business.

"I was trained at the Ateneo, and going on retreat was and remains important to me," he says.

And as was browsing his private site on his birthday. There was one year Escoler decided to forego the celebrations and just spend the day in prayer and reflection at the Bell Tower sunset.

"It was one of the best birthdays I've had. I realized the value of silence. It's the only way you can listen to yourself."

Before this epiphany, Escoler was thinking of what do with the additional land. It took him nearly a year to transform the coffee plantation into the idea of a remote yet accessible sanctuary.

It has become quite common, says Escoler, for people to stay at St. Joseph's before making life-changing decisions. Some guests were only days away from undergoing major surgery.

Getting over a loss

One guest was a 27-year-old man whose earlier deal of concrete than a year after their wedding. She was pregnant.

In a vain attempt to cope with his loss, the man would spend Christmas and New Year, the past three years, all by himself abroad. That was until a friend asked him to give St. Joseph a try.

The man booked himself a room before Christmas Eve, and stayed for three days. He sought solitude.

"On Christmas day he spent three hours crying in the chapel and that was it," says Escoler. "Before he left, he told me that he had experienced the best Christmas of his life here."

He sought solace to the tragedy in his young life, and got it that Christmas.

Then there was this young woman who went into depression after learning that the parent her father's biological daughter. He entered the fact that her mother had kept it from her.

The mother asked her daughter to spend some time at St. Joseph's. The daughter agreed. Before the after-lunch visit over, both women were able to pour their hearts out to each other.

A stay at St. Joseph's Sanctuary is no guarantee that all its guests' troubles and twisted feelings will disappear in a snap. But for a good number of people, the road to forgiveness, acceptance and healing may just be a weekend drive to Tagaytay away.

(For inquiries, call Ofc Jose at (0928.506.7702, (0402 414-0209 and (096) 494-0538.)

MINIMALIST chapel is a secluded area in the garden

LIFE-SIZE image of Virgin Mary looks over the plantation.

WOOD, panoramic glass windows and religious art make the chapel the best place for solitude.

SANCTUARY'S iron gate opens to an image of St. Joseph.

SKYLIGHT in the garden is perfect for either bonding or quiet meditation.

FINEST Escoler amid a flock of ducks.

Bishop Tagle's 'Seven Last Words' now on video

"HABILIN ANG PITONG HULING Wika ni Hesus" is a documentary film in seven segments of Omar Bishop Chito Tagle's reflections on the Seven Last Words of Christ. It also has songs of "Pitong Huling Wika ni Hesus" composed by Bel J. Manuel.

Each of Bishop Chito's reflections is a "stand-alone" segment, relating to contemporary life. Each song is a stand-alone piece.

All these are substantial reasons for retreat and reconsecration materials.

Even if "Habilin" has Leviten theme, the reflections and lyrics are for all seasons. After all, it isn't "The Event" a study-experience?

"Habilin" was made under the auspices of Origin and Company through the Origin Foundation, Inc. and was produced with Jesuit Communications Foundation, Inc. and Bel J. Manuel Inc. It is now available in DVD/CD at "Mahusay ng Mahusay Pastol Seminary in Tagaytay, Imus Cathedral, all Jesuits outlets, Chapel of the Holy Family in Greenhills, Sacrificial Center of St. Pio of Pietrelcina Inc. at 188 E. Rodriguez Ave. Compound, Magallanes, Quezon City, and Christ the King Parish office, Greenmeadows.

PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Barcenas

Ministry for the deaf

It breaks our heart when we encounter children and teenagers who can communicate only by sign language. But the Catholic Ministry to Deaf People (CMDP) makes their lives a little better.

CMDP, through its scholarship program, has supported more than 2,000 deaf children and young adults to finish at least secondary education since 1991.

In its Abaz Prevention and Treatment Program, CMDP provides counseling and family intervention to help deaf young people who suffered abuse. It now coordinates with the Philippine National Police to help the abused.

Religious instructions are conducted in 10 public schools in Metro Manila, by catechists and volunteers. Sign interpretation at Sunday Masses in 13 Manila parishes, including Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City and San Roque de Manila Parish in Sta. Cruz, Manila, are being done for deaf people.

To support the ministry, please visit Smart Gilmore at (0918-7760734 or call 4266205. Thank you for your kindness.

Plus awardees

At the Holy Mass celebrating the feast day of Our Lady of Pilar on July 1 at Club Filipino, the Golden Award for service to Our Lady of Pilar was given to Dr. Carolina Prado. She is now 81, 31 years ago, she heeding of Fr. Ramon Arguelles, SJ, then rector of Manila Cathedral, to start the Sto. Domingo Church on the first Sunday after July 2. Carmen Carag and Concepcion Canon Caballero were also awarded for their unceasing efforts to spread devotion to the Virgin under this title.

PLUS Bishop Chito Tagle delivered the "Seven Last Words" for "Habilin."

Golden jubilee

High School 1959, the last batch of Holy Ghost College (HGC) before in charge of name to College of the Holy Spirit (CHS), is celebrating its Golden Jubilee on Feb. 1, 2009. Regular meetings have been held since 2007 to mobilize the 58 members to ensure class. Names: Please contact any of the following: Cristina Antonio Cinco (632) 7148331, (0915)3213941, e-mail tinacinco-dal@yahoo.com; Milagros J. Dalusong, e-mail milgrdal@yahoo.com; and Ma. Isabel Rafael Dipasupil (632) 6047660, (0917)5986687.

Thirty Hours Gone will be the theme concept at the College of the Holy Spirit in Mendiola, Manila. Holy Ghost College 1958 Golden Jubilee and College of the Holy Spirit 1974 Circuit both are co-hosts.

Condolences

Three deaths that happened **two weeks from each other saddened** us very much. Inday Bernardez Francia passed away after a long illness. Fredy Ibañez Philippines Airport Terminal Toledo died of cancer at St. Joseph's Hospital in Sanders, New York. Didoy Pantin Bayless's brother, Renato Pantin, died suddenly.

Let us pray for the repose of their souls. Tony Cajayon remind me to say that Benjie Toledo has joined our other friends in heaven: Cuby Dadiles, Ernie Santiago, Joe Salazar, Manuel Montero and Seanor Tantang.

Concert for 'Frank' victims

The concert on July 11 at Manila Hotel Tivoli Pavilion organized by the Church of San Lorenzo Ruiz will also benefit the victims of Typhoon "Frank," according to Fr. Erno Dizi, the parish priest of the New York Avenue Church.

While the concert is originally meant to raise money for the remodeling headquarters of the Mission held in the church, whatever the Filipino parish in New York.

The concert will feature singer-composer Jose Mari Chan and soprano Gerda Bautista for the benefit of the global-ridden TV Mass.

Donor sponsors at P5,000 are welcome. Tickets for dinner and concert are at 10,000 per person. To order and to help, please text 0919-8617127 or 0917 8718670 or 8515-9267189 or call 6074930.

Same time, same place

HAPPY: Justice Raul Victorino, Mayor Pioneer Trinidad, Mayor Alfredo Lim and Lolit Yap Ong is crowning Gov. Manny Villar, Secretary Angelo Reyes, Winston Garcia, Myther Bulaig and Mayor JV Ejercito

IT HAS BEEN A TRADITION FOR the past 14 years for friends from all walks of life to drop by Myther and Friends to wish Myther Bulaig well on his birthday.

His lovely wife Susan, noted for her exotic, home-cooked dishes, prepares only the best not only on his birthday but also every Thursday when the popular Thursday Club meets. Everyone enjoys her special kare-kare, steamed lapu-lapu and crispy baby crabs.

So it came clear on Myther's recent birthday, top personalities from politics and the media came not only to partake of Susan's dishes, but also to toast the celebrant.

At Myther's place, the hottest political buzz session. It's no wonder that guests drop by every Thursday. But whenever Myther's birthday comes around, his door friends and guests have only one wish for him. Everyone wishes him only the best things in life.

MAYOR JV Ejercito and Myther Mata

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CP #: 0917-4670284

Travel Briefs

Cavite marks water festival

COMBINING THEIR LOVE FOR WATER AND festivities, Caviteños once more got drenched in the annual celebration of the Bagalio Gawis City Water Festival.

The week-long celebration started with bay clean-up activities participated by local residents. This is complemented with water games, music competitions, concerts, cultural presentations, parades, fashion shows, cooking demos, art exhibit and bike rally.

Tagbigan sa Pasig and Estacad wrapped up the merriment. Dominating the Tagbigan is the Estacad, where an image of St. John the Baptist is paraded through the city streets.

HK Disneyland promos

Hong Kong Disneyland has re-launched the extremely popular EX "Buy 3 Get 1 Free" offer exclusively for the travel trade. Since March 2008, the packages have experienced a 30% growth in sales year on year.

In addition, guests staying at the two Disney themed hotels can continue to enjoy "Stay and Play for 2 Days" that allows them to visit the park for two days for the price of one.

For more information, visit www.hongkongdisneyland.com.

BORACAY ESCAPADE AT SEA WIND

Avail of the off-season rates with Sea Wind's Boracay Escapade 2008, ongoing until Oct. 15. Spend 3 days and 2 nights for as low as P4,050 inclusive of De Luxe room accommodation, daily breakfast, welcome drink and round-trip transfers via Caticlan airport. Sea Wind is a 48-room luxury resort located on the northern sector of Boracay's main beach. Sea Wind boasts of the biggest and most private beachfront in the island. Spread over a one-hectare property, it has lush gardens and sprawling grounds that is home to a museum that features local artists and artifacts. Call 6151285, e-mail reservation@pacific.net.ph.

ARTISTS' HAVEN

Angono, Antipolo, Rizal LAND is the setting for the eastern highland of Manila—a township of residential communities in the East where art-animators-inspired environment serves to enhance the lives of its residents.

Surrounded by magnificent views including that of Laguna de Bay, enhanced by the CBDs of Fort Bonifacio, Makati and Ortigas that are within easy driving distance, the sprawling expanse of Manila can immediately cultivate creativity and artistry. This inspired environment is complemented with well-planned leisure and recreational amenities exclusive to the community members, educational facilities and commercial establishments that provide lifestyle conveniences to residents, and a variety of activities that cultivate the mind for knowledge and the arts.

Manila is a township under Filinvest Legacy that's only 15 kilometers east of the Ortigas Business District. Call FLI at 856 7700 or Manila Lodge Hotel, Ruta Rivera, FCDM to

FRIGATE ARA Libertad

Argentine ship to visit Manila

ARA Libertad is one of the world's biggest ships and one of the most bemedaled

ON JULY 8, MANILA WILL WELCOME THE Argentine Sail Training Ship ARA Libertad.

The beautiful tall ship will sail on the ports of Manila Harbor for a five-day good-will visit.

The world tour seeks to train and expose the future officers and sailors of the Argentine Navy in seafaring and navigating arts, and to represent the Argentine people to different parts of the world. The ship also promotes Argentine culture and history.

The commander of the Frigate ARA Libertad is Capt. Jose Jose Ignacio. Its activities in Manila include visits to the frigate of Philippine Navy counterp ralls ranch Philippine authorities, visit to the frigate of maritime institutions of the Philippines.

The crew will also meet with members of the Argentine community in the Philippines, and visit historical and cultural sites in Metro Manila.

Built by craftsmen

The Frigate Libertad was designed and built in national shipyards by Argentine craftsmen. The ship was officially incorporated to the Navy's fleet in 1963 when the ceremony of the flag confirmation took place. Since then, she has gained an important place among the biggest sailing ships in the world. Along more than 500,000 nautical miles sailed to date, she has visited over 400 ports in more than 90 countries.

Libertad has a crew of 330 men and women from the Navy (including 90 midshipmen and midshipmen) and her main purpose is to prepare them to face their professional future on life. They train by sailing across the world on six to eight months' ride, receiving instruction onboard during navigation. The chance for these future officers to encounter different cultures and nationalities is one of the goals of the training trip.

Every year, more than 40 junior officers from other navies and from the Argentine Army, Air Force and the Naval Coastguard make the trip with the Argentinean Navy. Universities students and officers from many countries have also called on board.

In 2004, after sailing thousands of miles across the seas, she was taken to a midlife refit. These improvements, also performed in the Argentine shipyards "Tan Astarago," have updated her equipment to keep her sailing for further decades.

The general conduct was concluded in 2007. Facilities for female cadets and crew were added in line with current diversity policies in the Navy. Navigation technology was also updated.

In 1966, Libertad established the world record for transatlantic crossing. Until sail navigation) between Cape Race (Canada) and Dursey Island (Ireland), 1,741.4 nautical miles (3,225.1 km) in six days and four hours, and between Cape Race (Canada) and Liverpool-Dublin line, 2,058.6 nautical miles in eight days and 12.5 hours. She won the Boston Tropic Trophy on nine occasions: in 1966, 1975, 1981, 1985, 1987, 1992, 1998, 2000 and 2007.

IN THIS ISSUE
Spring-inspired
Payumo-Filamor wedding /D5

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Back to home bliss

IF BUSINESS tycoon **Tomas Gokongwei** is looking cool, if not jubilant, these days, it could be because domestic stability, or even bliss, appears to have been restored.

Since he fell in love with one of the most beautiful Filipinas, **Gretchen Barretto**, this low-key businessman has been attending hot previews, walk-ins (first on his part). The couple are the items talked about—across media platforms, in bars—through the highs and lows, and higher highs of their relationship.

Apparently this is another high in their cycle.

After real estate mogul Tony Tan Caktiong and Michelle Yap's wedding last Saturday, the Gokongwei-Barretto duo were the only ones left standing in the social circuit. Not that they were invited to the nuptials, but they were the only ones left who had not been seen in public together.

Tomas and Gretchen were also the only ones who had not been photographed together since the Gokongwei matriarch, Elizabeth Yang, died in January.

Tomas and Gretchen's relationship has been the subject of speculation since the death of Tomas' wife, Cornelia "Tessie" Gokongwei, in 2006. Gretchen was married to Tomas' son, Lance Gokongwei, at the time.

Tomas and Gretchen's relationship was first reported in 2007, but they were not photographed together until January this year, when Gretchen was spotted at the wake of Elizabeth Yang.

Since then, the two have been seen in public together on several occasions, including Tomas' birthday party in March, Gretchen's birthday party in April, and Tomas' daughter Lisa's wedding in May.

Tomas and Gretchen have been spotted together at the wedding of Tony Tan Caktiong and Michelle Yap, and at the wedding of Tomas' daughter Lisa.

Tomas and Gretchen have been spotted together at the wedding of Tony Tan Caktiong and Michelle Yap, and at the wedding of Tomas' daughter Lisa.

BACK C4

Tee with Ronald McDonald

Our team didn't figure much in the overall tally, but we were the most photographed

TESSS!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes

LIKE IS A CONSTANT QUEST FOR health. In the '80s, my choice of physical activities included golf, squash and **Jane Fonda** workouts. Of course, I've abandoned the last because I don't have a Botticelli anymore!

The more recent golf tournament I joined was the Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) Golf Tournament at the Sta. Elena Golf Club. Probably the only golf-playing friend stricken, Ronald McDonald let the lo- support my effort.

Watching Ronald hit a golf shot is always exciting because his big shoes are directly in his swing path. Luckily, after 12 years of charity tournaments, Ronald can swing and actually hit the ball!

My team golfmates, **Malu Gamboa** and **Lucas Jurado** were all dressed to suit our yellow McDonald's colors. Our team score didn't count for much in the overall scores, but we were, indeed, the most photographed. And needless to say, we had the most fun. Our low-handicapper, Lucas, took charge of our long drives, while steady Malu had great pitches and I took care of the challenging putts.

Every year, the RMHC raises millions to fund their programs like Bright Minds Read, which trains to send underprivileged kids to school by Grade 3.

This reading program is in partnership with the Department of Education. Thanks to the support level McDonald's clients, suppliers and friends, the tournament has been a successful project, with all participants enjoying a fun round of golf while raising funds for education.

The Yang family, the family behind Mc- Jo, is a golfing family. Its coach **George Sr.**, son **Kenneth** and **Richie** and various grandchildren were all scattered around the course swinging away.

Like in most tournaments, the best part for most participants are the post-game raffle, giveaways and door prizes. We didn't let required until even the "most cursed-of" golfer can still win the grand prize. And if not that, the many other great prizes like Manson purses and cakes.

TEE D2

RONALD McDonald is commended for off

TRIATTNT Highlands golfers Sandy Ramundeta , TDS-CEO Bobbie Dalgado, Mobil Prisco, Sea Princess and MMC Logistics Phil. president Tong Albers

HOST Sea Princess, Ronald McDonald and RMHC president Kenneth Yang with overall golf team champion

GEORGE Tong, son Kristine and grandsons Keith and Ryan

MCDONALD'S Team. Kenneth Yang and his son Keith, Louie Parrales, Sea Princess and Mole Bandoy

Tee with Ronald McDonald

From page D1

Assumption meet

The next tournament up is the Assumption Together Golf Tournament on July 14, again at the Sta. Elena Golf Club. Originally scheduled weeks ago but postponed because of the typhoon, this golf game is now all set for next Monday and is an attraction due to its many prizes and giveaways.

This tournament is for the benefit of the Assumption Maidez schools and other socio-civic activities of the AC Maidez.

There's no truth to the ugly rumor that you must wear a red plaid skirt to play in this, you don't even have to be from Assumption! So Ateneans and La Sallites are welcome to join their nonsympathetic friends to raise money for charity. Call 0943368.

I'm basically a tournaments golfer. Like Tiger Woods, I play about six a year. Unlike Tiger though, I never win any.

SMAP board members Boning Dizon, Joim Vilar and SMAP president Barry Ribarin

QUINETO Herrera, Mia Velasco and Wuer Eala

Squash

I thought I had abandoned squash. Over the summer, though, I resurrected my vintage squash racket for a tournament organized by sumokwood Twenty de Leon-Granadero.

The 1st Celebrity Squash Cup was the major kickoff event for the Squash Rackets Association of the Philippines (SRAP) to promote this rootsinging sport among lemon balls, health advocates and former squash players. The squash courts of Makati Sports Club had never seen so many celebrities and squash enthusiasts cheering on their favorite teams. I had a flashback of me playing squash with a shoulder pads.

Performing ceremonies Akiko Thomson, ABS-CBN Publishing's Ernie Lopez, Ironcurt's Lelea Campo and designers Rhett Eala were among my teammates.

We might have been rusty at squash but we were definitely champions at cheering. Twenty told me she has never been so tossed in a room, all thanks to the intense squash workout.

The successful Celebrity Squash Cup was sponsored by Nike, Stuckli, Bida Essentials, Randy Ortiz, Fielded & Hung, Gerry's Grill and Calasaa Workshop. Thanks to these generous guys, it was a smash!

RMHC president Kenneth Yang and Sea Princess pose with Ronald McDonald and McDonald's employee-volunteers who helped during the RMHC Golf Tournament.

Bone health

The quest for health involves our bones too. Until recently, I never knew that keeping our bones and joints in alignment can make a world of a difference.

All this was explained when I visited a chiropractor for the first time. Dr. Michel Imtenah (tel. 09 20001, visit www.chiropractic.com.ph). He gave me an explanation, lay talk on our bones and the process of correction, and after that, I was literally straightened up!

I don't know whether it is just in my head or actually in my spine, but I felt taller after running out of Dr. Imtenah's clinic at the San Antonio Plaza Arcade in Makati.

After multiple children, a frustrated golf swing, a revived squash stunt and all my other sports activities, my spine had somehow gotten misaligned, which was nicely corrected by Dr. Imtenah.

CHIROPRACTIC specialists Michel Imtenah

ANTON Gonzales

RMHC chair George Tong

Keeping healthy and fit also means cleansing from within. Detox is the secret to healing concepts and achieving that perfect balance of body, mind and spirit.

A workshop, "Detoxifying the Mind, Body and Soul," will teach us all this on July 19 at the Discovery Suites, Ortigas Center, Pasig. This Wellness Workshop will have a series of lectures and inspirational talks along with an overnight detox treatment of liver and gallbladder incline.

Find out natural ways to maximize optimum health and learn about the 10 wholesome and organic super-foods that can change your life forever. Space is limited so call 8432030 or e-mail gva.registration@yahoo.com to book your slot.

Alicia Keys in Manila

Speaking of souls, Alicia Keys' upcoming concert is coincidentally titled "Unlocking the Soul." This mega event is a great way to detox your mind while listening to great rhythm and blues from this fantastic sensual artist.

"Unlocking the Soul" will be held on Aug. 8 at the open field area of SM Mall of Asia, now the country's largest entertainment venue. To be part of the multi-listening sensation concert experience, call SkyWorld at 8919999. Those interested to sponsor the event can call MTS Philippines at 7604580.

I may have abandoned Jane Fonda, but the modern equivalent is to have Alicia here on my Nike-lined while running a kilometer on her. Now that's the perfect pair to perfect health.

E-mail the author at eugeniusm@inquirer.com.ph.

Sunday Crossword

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — YOUR SIGN?

ACROSS

1 Lutheran seminary
5 Kin-removing act
10 Spring-up call
20 Opinion column
21 Dominican town
24 Sorority or pregnancies
25 Until late tonight, for all August, really?
26 Prince's body of water
28 Music provider after Monday's London gig?
29 — Mendes, drum
30 Delivers vocals
32 Lollipop's end
33 Bleacher
34 Dreams up
36 Narrow
Andrea
38 — — the cradle (adjust to semi-modern)
39 Nightmarish
40 Nightmarish hindrances, in a way, quite?
42 Growing
43 Sweet song
45 Sweet song
49 ABC news
48 Ms. — (cold-cream name)
47 Mineola
48 Passengers of football
50 Strictly abandoned
52 Prescriptive
53 "Proscribe" alternative to a prison jailer?
56 In an various manner
57 Rub down
58 Like some old lamps
61 Like some 2000 running mates or an outsider
62 "— for be Lucky Dog"
63 Cornrow
64 Comic Conway
65 Ill-Seven 2000 running mates or an outsider
67 Confession-ator
70 Have — (sound)
72 Dire degree
74 "It's — Bull"
76 Birthday wish
78 "1961 Public Crier ran in a Baton Rouge"
80 "Mock —"
81 Opposed to
84 "Wrap — Big Thing"
85 PC data type
86 Verbal tell
87 Money in Nice
88 AC — committee
89 Wednesday
93 City east of Denmark, to a neighborhood baker?
96 Big Apple
97 Pitcher's Hawks
98 Rub down
100 It's key to Lima
101 Like some old lamps
102 "— for be Lucky Dog"
103 Trivia
104 Cooper contemporary
105 Tennessee" or Chinese
106 Lollipop's end
107 Semicircle
108 Classroom
109 Nerve, loosely, and sweetness, to an Agra baker?
75 Have — (sound)
72 Dire degree
74 "It's — Bull"
76 Birthday wish
78 "1961 Public Crier ran in a Baton Rouge"
110 Part of rain
111 Cowboy's lasso
112 Hawaiian porch
113 Pitcher's Hawks
114 Like some old lamps
115 Aaron and Hanna

DOWN

1 Normal time
2 Eyelid stye
3 — 10, 10-
4 Concluding
5 Dandy
6 Down, e.g.
7 Some odd
8 Foreigner's
9 — — Shackleton
10 Hollywood
11 Mediterranean
6 — — on
12 Bad-mouth
13 Eye pain
14 Oil-field
15 Ms. —
16 Gun sticks
17 Ms. —
18 Bandy
19 Bandage, with "on"
20 Old Dick car
22 Cleveland
23 Bandage
27 Prevalence
31 Lightens up
35 "— a clue!" with sense
37 Sheet of stickers
40 Don't count
41 Cereal
44 Bowl bowl
46 Prevent with a bullet
48 Lightening to
50 Playing cards
51 One of Lyle Lovett's other wives
54 Bathtub in a cartoon
55 — — Alamo
59 Number of cavities
60 Backstage
62 Hawk's Prey
63 Money key
64 Punch
65 One of the Chesterfields
66 Hollywood
68 Ms. —
69 Ms. —
71 Pitcher's Hawks
73 Eye part
74 Oil-field
75 Ms. —
77 Ms. —
79 Ms. —
80 Ms. —
82 Ms. —
83 Ms. —
84 Ms. —
85 Ms. —
87 Ms. —
89 Ms. —
90 Ms. —
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94 Ms. —
95 Ms. —
97 Ms. —
99 Ms. —
101 Ms. —
103 Ms. —
105 Ms. —
107 Ms. —
109 Ms. —
111 Ms. —
113 Ms. —
115 Ms. —

answer on page F8

LEGA Carpo, Sea Princess, Patrice Diaz and Rowena Gonzales

Aspiring golfers Tonight Fernando, Philip Bernardez, Dennis Valdez and Allen Prieto

FASHIONABLE golfers at the Ronald McDonald House Charities Tournament at Sta. Elena Golf Club

POST-GAME reception at Makati Sports Club with Florencia Baranda, Pamela Diaz, Mia Velasco, Mimi Fernandez, Leica Carpo, Teddy Dizon and Sea Princess

CELEBRITIES at the gallery with for their games at stake.

Bottle after bottle of trust

Water by

Nestlé

Pure Life

DRINKING WATER WITH ADDED MINERALS

Nestlé brings health and wellness into every drop of Nestlé Pure Life. It's drinking water enriched with minerals such as Calcium and Fluoride, trusted by families around the world.

We know wellness.
We know better.
Let's drink to Life.

Sunday LIFESTYLE Relationships

Loving forever, day to day

THE AUTHOR with her mom

By Anna Isabel C. Sabenpesa
Contributor

Moms are great wives, too

TED WAS MY MOTHER told the story he was cynical when today a museum like my mom was not budged in by the men at the dinner dance where he first saw her. She was sedating, moved well on the dance floor and was quite attractive. When he finally got to strike up a conversation with the idolized mom. She was smart, confident and disinterested in trying to make an impression.

They became friends before taking it a step up and if anything, she became a stronger woman because he was confident enough to let her develop her potentials. Theirs was a marriage of equals.

She chose to be a full-time wife, putting aside a career to manage the home and be a mother to four daughters. It was a choice that she affirmed over her first 39 years of married life.

This impressed me that a woman with her abilities could comfortably decide not to pursue the path of a successful professional or entrepreneur. During her leisure, she sewed, knitted and quilted; she crafted leather jewelry; did Chinese brushwork and baked the best bread which we came home to after school.

For a while, she taught kindergarten after completing her second college degree, but the demands of being a teacher soon paired with being there for her family to do set aside teaching.

Mom was often quiet who preferred cinema and rubber shoes to opening up but I remember how elegant she was when she accompanied dad to his office affairs. She preferred to go camping and was in her element on an adventure trip when her side of the family were island hopping in a sarile boat they hired and summer had liked to travel in style and we returned to the same islands the following year on a yacht. I caught my mom's wistful look as we waved to its mates, cramped on the boats but she did turn proud to her bourgeois, deliciously basking the campsite served for cocktails in the company of diplomats.

Her life was an eloquent lesson on what it means to be a wife. The evening before my wedding, she quietly said, "Be everything your husband needs you to be."

Widowed at 42 years old, she had given him the best years of her life and had no regrets. Her widows, poised on in a single line and expressed eloquently in the course of her life, has continued in making my own transition of 20 years the happiest of my life. She had successfully communicated the value of this vocation and the privilegeousness of the person we currently ourselves to fill death to its past.

From the book "Notes: The Mother," published by Rose Ying Garrison

How to help your doctor heal you

"YOU KNOW YOUR BODY BEST, SO if you want your doctor to help you even more, you need to tell him your story because you are the expert of your own life," Margaret Sengson, head of Strategic Services Group of Medical City, told me one afternoon.

In the Philippines, the doctor's word is often God's word. If your child is ill, he seems to be the one the doctor says. But we tend to forget that not everything in our child's life is known to the doctor.

Medical City aims to create a new paradigm-setting in new advocacy, which will hopefully shift the way Filipinos think about doctors and healthcare.

Sengson says that at The Medical City, every patient is a partner in healthcare. It is a true partnership, where all things are equal, communication flows freely. However, in healthcare, this is often not the case.

Thus, for example, a child brought to the pediatrician after complaining of stomachaches. Tests are run but the doctor cannot seem to find anything wrong. Then the mother says, after an almost half-hour consultation, "Oh, by the way, he's also been complaining about his tummy." The mother who has been giving him a hard time is relieved...

Suddenly the pediatrician has the new insight into the problem. Child stress can be the root of all the effects not seen on a medical chart.

Another case is that of an elderly lola to the doctor by her children. She complains of palpitations and vertigo (dizziness). A battery of tests. Her heart is checked, all clear. Tests show she is as healthy as a horse. After consultations, she finally admits to her primary doctor that she has been having sleepless nights worrying about her youngest child who is working overseas as a nurse and has been the victim of wife-battering. Again, if the patient had only mentioned it earlier, money could have been saved and anxiety were not needed.

MODEL DOCTORS. Psychiatrist Cornelio Barzaga and cardiologist Patricia Agarrad Cheng flank Adhemarsis creative director Tess Ariñali.

ROOTS AND WINGS
Cathy Bolhao-Gabalfa

Some doctors are experts at dissecting their patients' ear. If it a gift, but it is also a skill that must be learned. However, not all doctors are adept. So, as parents, or caregivers in our own parents, we must ask the questions, to share our stories.

Doctors are not mind readers. Not everything relevant may be seen on a patient's chart. While numbers and test results are significant, there are signals, our voices about one's life that must be shared with your doctor.

Proactive

One needs to be proactive. Research on what it is you or your loved one has and don't be afraid to ask. Is there a better way? Are there alternative treatments? What is the best possible outcome? Can we do this or that? How much will this cost us?

Your doctor says help you but if you help yourself, tell him or her what is on your mind and to your heart, or what it is that is going on in your life.

We pay every good money to get the best healthcare. A doctor will appreciate it if he sees that you are open and interested to know more about your illness. Do not hesitate to share your fears. The best of doctors will not push you over tomorrow. They take the time to listen and show you compassion. Even if there is a whole gaggle of patients coming after you, the good doctor will not make you feel that you are being rushed.

Help your doctor

A CNN report suggests some ways a patient can better help his or her doctor.

- Bring in a complete list of your medications. This includes all the prescription and nonprescription medicines you are taking, along with health supplements and vitamins. Write the drug's name, dosage and how often you take it.
- Write down your health history. Know the illnesses in your bloodline—cancer, heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, mental health problems? Knowledge will encourage you to be more careful and vigilant about your health.
- Write a list of your concerns and share them. The CNN report quotes Dr. Janis Frank, an internist at Johns Hopkins, who says that she appreciates the patient who is ready "like a boy scout" and is not afraid to ask questions. If something is not clear, ask your doctor again. While notes when necessary, maintain eye contact and limit the right fit. In the day and age of HMOs, it is hard to be picky about doctors. But here's the think, often, I first research and find out the list of MDs the HMO has in a particular hospital. Once I have the names, I go around and ask colleagues, friends and relatives if they've had a bad experience with a doctor, or better yet, if I know someone from that hospital. Try to find out what about this doctor I am about to see so I know what to expect. Remember you have the right to seek a second opinion, and even a third one, especially if it's a major procedure. Work with the doctor you are most comfortable with.

E-mail the author at cathy-bolhao@gmail.com

Ex-lovers, both married, rekindle their romance

DEAR EMILY,

I had a girlfriend back in high school and we broke up when we were in college. Our paths recently crossed again and, again, we fell in love. We both live in Europe and have not seen each other though after that fateful day in college. We are now in our late 30s.

Sounds a happy ending, huh? No. We are now both married with two kids each.

We are not happy anymore with our respective partners because of the sexual issues that married couples must almost. There must though have long been issues in our relationship started. Honestly, if not for the kids, we would have chose a course.

The issue here is being happy. We want to live together as a happy couple.

Would it be too much to ask for happiness?

SAD

EMILY'S POST

Jonaly A. Mercado

As you've rekindled your love for each other and spoke on flying high and for again. You've started planning this and that and everything else to spend your, "to live as a happy couple together." And you even added drama to the scenarios by asking the ultimate question—"would that be too much to ask for happiness?"

Your unhappy as you with both your marriages? Are your respective spouses mutually unhappy with their relationship with the two of you as you are with them? And please, please, don't bring in the children in the equation as your excuse. They should never be the instigating factor in any relationship. You will be creating more unhappy individuals that way and this cycle of tragedy will never end because of it. Let's stop it right here.

If you think that your marriage and hers have reached the proverbial cliff and it's down-down-down for both—then—get off and get out of it as soon as you possibly can. There's no use holding on if it's truly the end of the road, dead end! Just make sure that this relationship is not hormone-driven.

Yes, you were in love once. But this can also only be a love sexually-ruled by a two-week tryst somewhere romantic. Wouldn't it be more tragic if such hot, torrid, spicy breathless passion for each other turned out to be just another draining affair that will fizzle out in a short while? Test the waters. Rekindle your emotions in your married and single life all the same. Because we only live with this old girlfriend will not turn out like the marriage you're having. Here are are you that you aren't become unhappy are day-to-day with, to use your words, "the rest of issues that married couples must almost." Don't run!

But, hey, it's your life. Do whatever floats your boat as flies low like—like a duck.

E-mail the author at emerald@inquirer.com.ph, Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letter to Emerald, Lig-ot st. 2000 phi.gov.ph and listen to Mr. Mercado or host the program "Kalilimuan Ngalimot," 7-7:15 a.m. Monday-Friday, on dzBB 594.2 FM.

Money and the married woman

By Rowena C. Burgos

MARRIED WOMEN WOULD probably prefer not to read a book titled "Money Matters & The Married Woman." However, its importance to women cannot be overstated.

Lillibeth Vergara-Legaste, author of "Money Matters & The Married Woman," discovered early that she didn't want to be told what she could and couldn't do with her money.

Since she was the youngest in one cause of arguments in a marriage, according to statistics from marriage and financial counselors, Legaste was inspired to write a book to give "a clearer understanding of sound financial management that will make for a stronger and lasting marriage."

In being reality into the reader's home, Legaste relates the stories of 10 dynamic married women: Cora Cruz Jacob, Tammy Hernandez Lejano, Rhoda Cristina Sulco Peralta, Marianne Gonzalez Herrera, Arnaiz Liboon Dato, Rose Barrera Villamor, Pilar Cuddi Vergara, Joanne Gaudiel Mangaoang, Irma Tapia Go-lot and Renato Arias Reyes.

"Their failures and successes are good lessons to inspire us about handling money responsibly in marriage," Legaste, a registered financial consultant, says in the book's preface.

Good reasons

There are good financial reasons should aim to be financially independent.

Not only are women expected to live an average of seven to 10 years longer than men, their retirement income is less than half that of men.

According to the US-based Success Center for Women and Retirement Research, the combination of lower salaries and spending less time in the workforce means that women have retirement benefits that are about a quarter those of men.

Other statistics show that about 50 percent of women over age 50 are single—either through choice, divorce or death of a partner—and as are financially responsible for themselves and the family's couple of children.

For divorcees, after that connected of an ex-husband has left you for a woman half his age, or worse, he has taken a fancy to someone his own gender, there will come a time when reality bites.

"Money Matters & the Married Woman" is not a book to be taken lightly. It is immensely useful to women readily how taken a course to finances.

Legaste shares simple steps to set up your family household budget and smart money tips.

- Educate yourself about money, how to save and invest.
- Teach your children the value of money.

These subjects may be as palatable as candied in your face, but if showing us a small or means passing food on your dinner table, it is better to acquire a taste for it as early as possible.

On where to get financial advice, the writer has devoted pages of advice from her interviewees, beginning with how to make it through the first year, choosing a financial advisor, and maybe hiring a stockbroker.

For those whose lives are entangled in some business, there are tips to get the best out of a difficult situation. A woman native in business is a conspicuous target for con jobs.

Readers can also learn estate planning,—a backup plan if something happens to you, and it will, sooner or later. So, it is best not to leave your hard-earned money to the little whims of fate.

"Money Matters & the Married Woman" is not bedside reading. It touches on what seems like investment subjects. Legaste has performed a great service in women by having taken a survival kit—as much as matters in marriage.

So if you don't like being told what to do—especially when it comes to your money, start learning what to do about it.

- Budget your income, assets and liabilities
- Work or business grow a worthwhile

Sunday LIFESTYLE Weddings

FILIPINOS Jennifer Jonathan and Andrei Ang, Susan, Eric, Carla and Anthony Alamar

Spring-inspired wedding of a handsome couple

BRIDE Filamor and Tonito Paynano

THE groom's friends from London Business School: Andy Kim, Francis Wu, Luke Stoeckel, Per Lunde, Sourav Chopra, Fred Hagoros, Carlos Gutierrez

ELSA Payumo and Gruia Paynano Ayala

CATHY Sarabia and Raymond Babst and Mike and Rina Tan

Girls and Kay Montilla, John and Barbie Tiongco, Kim and JP de Venecia, Janina Revilla-Diaporic, Margie Diaporic, Ana Valdez, Migbay Diaporic and Derek Santos

By Maurice Arcasio

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL, BREEZY, SUNNY afternoon, clichéd as that may sound, when the eye-catching, radiant-looking bride Regina Filamor, daughter of Georgia Sardenuenas Belo Filamor and his wife Susan Vho, and her handsome, good-looking Tonito Paynano, son of former Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority chair and Senator Rep. Felicito Paynano and his wife, sultry beauty Daisy Sison, exchanged "I do's" at the cool Tagaytay Highlands' quaint Shadow de Dios Chapel, pulongpulong.

Regina and Tonito's wedding details and ceremony were superb—from the delicate floral arrangements to the spring-inspired swaths of the entourage and to the well-polished chapel. It was the most inviting setting for the family of both sides and close pals who witnessed and participated in the beautiful couple's new chapter of their life together, dahlings.

After the solemn church rituals, the newlyweds held their grand reception in Midlands cool veranda, where 200 of their invitees couldn't say enough of the superbly prepared dishes eaten.

Then, the "toasting" of the couple took place. It was participated in by some of their real close friends, pulongpulong.

Pleasant surprises

A few pleasant surprises came along the way as well. Tonito recited a romantic poem and sang his own rendition of Gold-

PHYLIPPO Arnolfo Lee, Ela, Daisy, Tong, Ani and Alison

DOUGLAS and Margie Kwok, Francis Veloso, JR Barcos, Ted Manahan, Sunny Angara, Christine Luman, Tristan Chua, Orino Salgado and Cecille Antonio

ANNE Sanapo, Karina Palanca, Tessa Dugan, Nicole Vergara, Jean Jose, Tessie Dennis (in empire) and couple, Mai Mai Ignacio, Jill Jovellar, Mel Lozano and Anna Brizz

plan's "fellow" to his beautiful wife who couldn't hold back her tears.

To add more spice to this perfect wedding, the couple surprised everyone by presenting Sunny Tortilad, the actress" of the early hours of their wedding. Tessie's father surprised the couple with an awesome display of fireworks.

Once the toasting of the popular bubbly's Moët et Chandon champagne took place, the to-be-wed couple hit the dance floor with a super fun and entertaining number to get the party on the roll.

No sooner than you could but an eyelash, the young, hip and young at heart rushed with Tessie's pals, former colleagues and classmates from London (between Ishaad and Regina's gang from high school and Boston University. They all united in from various parts of the world to witness Tessie and Regina's priceless celebration.

A perfect match definitely made in heaven, dahlings.

Cheers, dahlings, to our newest Mr. and Mr Physician.

Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couples, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and group shot along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the Inquirer, P.O. Box 2103 Makati Central Post Office 1260 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and in succession.

BORROMEO - BAEZA

Engr. Abelardo Jose II Borromeo and Angel and Rosa Borromeo of San Vicente, San Jose, Camarines Sur recently married Margie G. Baeza, daughter of Arsenio (deceased) and Anita Baeza of San Pedro, Iloilo, Iloilo. The wedding was solemnized by Rev. Fr. Sabino Ilao M. Palanca at Basilica of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, Naga City. The reception followed at Star mark Royale, Naga City.

AYO-OA

Darwin Ayo, son of Neil and Annabelle A. Ayo, recently married Nenette Gu, daughter of Steve and Lourdes Gu, at the Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish, Sta. Rita, Olongapo City. Reception followed at Bluffton Hotel.

INCIONG-ARMADO

Dr. Gaetan Inciong, son of Gaetan Inciong (deceased) and Rosa Bernardino will tie the knot with Annabelle Schleske, daughter of Jaime and Florence Armado on July 12, 10 a.m. at the Parish of Holy Sacrifice, UP Diliman, QC. Reception follows at Subayong Mount, UP Diliman, Quezon City.

RAMOS-DE GUZMAN

Richard Ramos and Jasmine de Guzman recently tied the knot at the St. Andrews Cathedral, Binondoc. Reception followed at the Heritage Hotel. The bride's gown was done by Edward Tang.

LOYOLA-LAMPARERO

Nelson D. Loyola, son of Jesus (deceased) and Concepcion Loyola, and Grace D. Lamparero, daughter of Simeon and Perla Lamparero exchanged vows last April 26 at St. Nicolas de Tolentino Parish, Cebuzan, Bolo City.

Back to home bliss

From page D1

cent injected during a dinner treat for Dutch Ruffo Gutierrez and Pepe Fernandez. (It turned out it was just a rumination glitch.)

Also, Kimbey has been more visible at outside...looking chesty—and was said to be his old suave, charming self again, not enthralled from the dating scene.

But he's now back apparently, seen in social circulations—but in female(ish) arms. It seems that the two have agreed to give it another try, and Gretchen is putting her daughter above all else, including a romantic thrill.

Gossip website says bye

In the don't-think-big-I'm-over-for-the-people-behind chikka-time-outta!

It appears to be so. Last Friday, the site posted its "farewell" with a photo of a rascally rival Lindsay Lohan flashing a peace sign: "The time has come and we write this to you."

The sad same after Jessie Eggerman posted on her own blog (www.jessieeggerman.com) late July 3 that she had discovered the identity of the anonymous boyfriend in Chikatime injured out.

One of Jessie's web-savvy readers did all the sleuthing work and gave her the dirt: nick—Jhon Eli P. address and his current location to his long-time and recently ex-lover. "I'm overwhelmed with the facts and information I have," Jessie said in her blog.

Last Thursday, Jessie gave the people behind what she calls "Chikatime" a 24-hour deadline—during these to "expose the site for public viewing...delete their previous posts, retract their malicious lies, apologize to all the victims" and create a link to Jessie's site bashing people in "the trash about Chikatime."

Chikatime appears to have complied and did see her text—disappearing from the internet altogether "para wala nang gulo; we apologize to everyone we wrote about. Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat at pasensya. Abangan ang chikatime the moving, coming soon!"

Bambi Harper gets death threats

Now let someone Advertisement Bambi Harper has been getting death threats apparently over her advocacies to restore the old glory of Old Manila.

"Bambi's been receiving death threats," said Joan Orendain, a culture advocate, "and so has her driver."

Allied with Harper in her campaign are not the least bank in the Walled City six property owners and the mayor schools—Letran, Santa Rosa, Ilagan, Lyceum, and Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

There campaign is again what Orendain calls as "restoration" —here paint and banky-tonks, "drag rings" operating on "Banana Island" near Letran, and local officials allied with the squatters.

Designer toys for big boys

At the start, designer toys embodied the youthful alternative culture wherein adult collectors valued their individuality of expression. Lately, these toys are perceived as lucrative investments with high resale value on eBay.

Richmagic Limited edition vinyl toys have been around for a decade, it's been catching on in the Philippines only the past two years.

Collectible vinyl toys were made here in 1998 by a small business in Pasay. Designers behind this cutting-edge store began offering limited numbers of vinyl toys evocative of pop culture icons.

When the toys were released, fans would queue and the next day the resale worth of the sold-out toys would triple or quadruple their original cost.

Graphic designers, ad agency artists and illustrators came out with their own toys, which are considered as art pieces rather than playthings.

Because of the buzzwave, the craze spread from Japan, Hong Kong, the US and UK.

Businessman Big Boy Cheng established Fresh! on Sept. 15 (parents Kitty, Queenie City) to supply limited-edition toys. Anthony Yupangco handles Fresh! Domestic at the Slow World Showroom.

Local devotees of these toys are the likes of Bonggi Maandig and model-girlfriend Gemaica Cadness, broadcaster Julius Babao and Jay Taruc, noted producer and rapper Pamela Maglalang, actors Richard Gutierrez, John Prats, and Jay Caunca, and such bands as Sandwich and Black Pencil. MTV DJ Bob Villeda and advocacy agencies.

One of the most popular brands is Kidrobot. Its most popular products are Dunny and Munny, blank-faced vinyl figures on which you paint your own. The concept was inspired by graffiti and street art.

Another iconic design is the Yo-Fu series, inspired by the Japanese television. It costs P1,000 on sale.

These toys are bought by ad agencies as design inspirations for creative packaging. The older and more they get, the higher the prices at eBay than their original retailing.

Yupangco was surprised to discover that the designer toys have a cult following. These toys are precious enough that many customers leave a new purchase unopened in its box, hoping to carry on its spiraling resale value one eBay.

Yupangco also has toy wherein the artist's prototype costs P40,000 while the original toy fetched only P5,000.

Freddy Dumaual has a toy of artist Jeremiah Bagpas' head attached to a blue pig. This costs P60,000.

One of his interesting products is the Fantasy Breakfast key chain which includes the search for the mystery object. The buyer opens the shell from hunting for that elusive item. That's one of the reasons behind the designer toy craze. "It's like buying your happiness for little things," says Yupangco.

YO-FU Robot. The Japanese designers took a common staple into package and made it into a toy. This originality has inspired creative directors. Yo-Fu Multibox by Bandi (dots) drew inspiration from the popular Japanese cartoon series. Their cuteness in value when resold on eBay.

THE CAVE Society has been talking about this humongous Mabuhay Cave home of a prominent lawyer. To preserve the richness of the Old World ambience, she covered her furniture with the ubiquitous plastic. As if it weren't enough, even the plush leather seats of her luxury car are covered in plastic. The reason: "Baka madumihan (they might get soiled)".

MID YEAR
JULY 7 - AUG 7, 2008
SALE!
VANHEUSEN
BEST DRESS SHIRT
SM : Mall of Asia, Clark, Cebu, Pampanga, Baguio, Davao, Megamall, NorthEdsa, Southmall, San Lazaro
ROBINSONS : Galleria, Manila, OTHER : Limketkai, Festival, Greenhills, Gateway, Riverbanks, Shangrila, Market-Market, Tiendna
PER DTI-NCR PERMIT # 0226 SERIES OF 2008

AMANDA and Tarnie Booth

MICHEL and Jacquelin Lhuillier

MIA Arroyo

Debut party with 1930s theme

DINDO ASO DEE DEE HAman[] toured the party of the season to mark the 18th birthday of their only daughter, Diana Aloha. 90s to all and nobody else was the belle at last night.

There was a dress to 6—1930s found, which meant ladies in slinky gowns of black or white or both (and jewels), and dapper gentlemen in smart dark coats and silky ties.

The venue was the Sports Club Cebu. Champagne and canapés were served at the foyer, while the dinner and program, followed by dancing, were held at Gatsby Grand Ballroom.

There was a "cocktail with a twist," since the hosts played various Dodo 1930s musicals and hit tunes. Ty la Broadway" sequence rehearsed to explain the dance sequence.

Eighteen of Cebu's most dashing socialites, including David Abrotia, had a chance to trip the light fantastic with Miss Aloha, there were 18 roses for her, as well as 18 Cosmocles, and 18 glowing candles representing many good wishes.

Marco Gaisbrelli, Mia's cousin and outing champ, showed what a good singer he was, which gives him a great fallback career. Stunning proudly were his mom, Cheona Ferraren Gaisbrelli, and grandma, Lena Ferraro, who's glamorous as ever.

Cebu Cebu

Celine Picornell

With so many young people around, and powerful dance music, the bash went on till way past midnight.

National Day of France

French Ambassador and Mme. Gerard Clement are expected in July 13 for the observance of Bastille Day. That's the National Day of France, celebrated here by Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Lhuillier together with Les Amis de la France.

The reception will be at Pino, the most elegant Filipino restaurant in Cebu, José del Prado is in charge.

July is Spanish month for Cuenca Español de Cebu and highlight days is July 25, dubbed "Dia de Santiago."

Spanish Ambassador Dan Luis Arias Borrero and his wife Onda Sobchal de Arias have been invited to grace the occasion. It will not be a formal affair this year, but a "Tapas Night" with quite an array of gastronomic delights, and very fine wines.

Over at the Shores Pido Plaza Hotel: Elena Hunt, the general manager is Swiss. And so there will be a grand Swiss holiday fete—week of August. But, then, there's always something going on at Shores Side. A general debutantes' ball is being planned in September. The next event is Chinkerfest!

LETTY Ferrer

CEBU City First Lady Margot Osmeña and son Miguel

DINDO and his Arroyos

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Brenda G. Velarde

Want to live a fantastic life?
Let Bo Sanchez inspire you every week.

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Why The Lettermen still packs the Big Dome

By Pedrido Concepcion

WHY DO FILIPINOS LOVE THE LETTERMEN?

The three-time pop vocal group's concert Thursday night at the Araneta Coliseum was its third in three years, not counting the dozens of times it has performed here since the 1970s. We figured people would get tired at some point. Every-listening music tends to get boring in a big venue.

We were mistaken.

The Big Dome was almost full Thursday night, with a crowd that would've been a senior-citizen assembly, save the victims young and middle-aged — who were probably there to accompany their elders. Everyone was smiling.

The appeal of a Lettermen gig could be due to several factors. One is the timelessness of the group's trademark three-part harmony singing, which the remaining original member, Tony Butala, has successfully preserved by bringing two of the best vocal talents he could find: Mark Pentecost and Donovan Tea. The trio not only showed flexibility in their high-and-low-notes interplay; they also demonstrated awesome power in solo spots.

TRIPLE THREAT Donovan Tea, Mark Pentecost and Tony Butala

Hearty applause

So while the older couples swooned with smooth renditions of "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing," "Put Your Head on My Shoulder," "Stranger Le" and "Dream of Love" in the early part of the show, there was a lot more enthusiasm and more hearty applause for Donovan's exuberant cover of "I Feel I Would Leave You" (minus the assisted "Caruso"), Tea's impressible interpretation of "Somewhere" from "West Side Story" and "Portrait of My Love", and Butala's jazzy Stuart Smalley.

Another great feature of the show was the four-member ensemble (Tony Savio's) which kept the tempo of many songs alive with the sound of brass.

Still another crowd-pleasing element: the Lettermen changing near the show's end to Barong Tagalog, to sing "Hindi Kita Malilimot" and "Ewhd ito 'Yo."

Snapshot: march

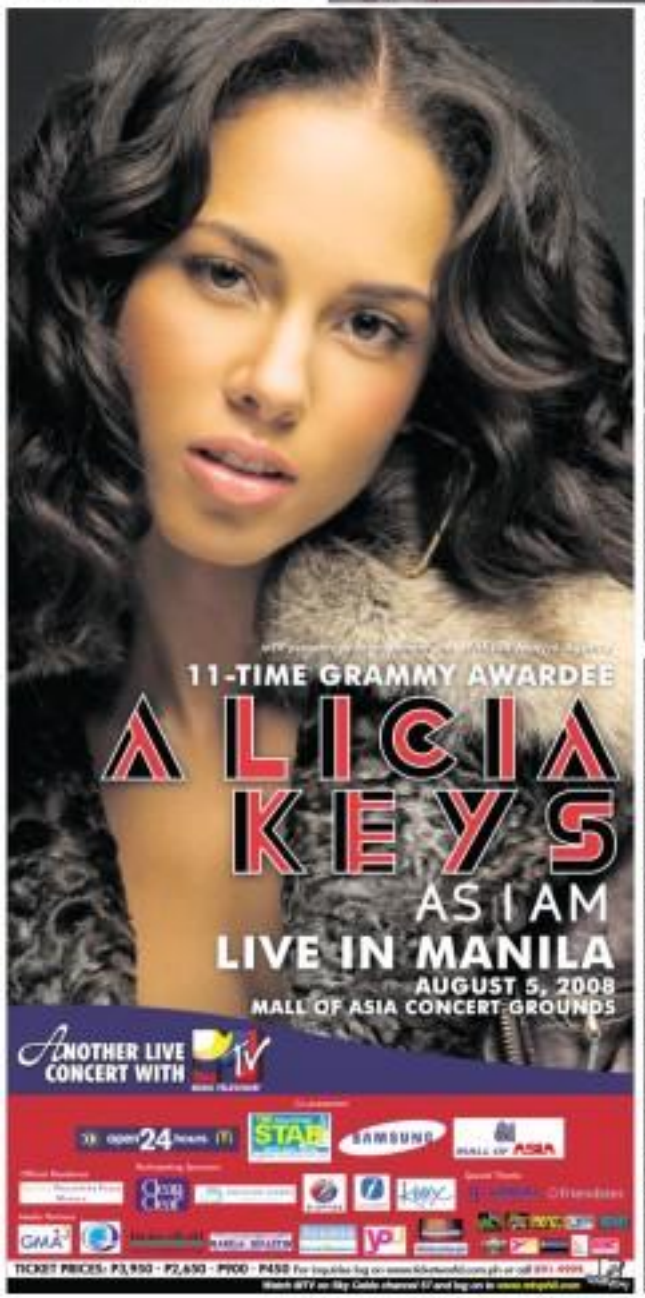
But the part that was truly a unique facet of their performance was asking everyone who wished to have snapshots with them to line up and climb onstage. This happened, amazingly enough, as "Graduation Day" was being sung.

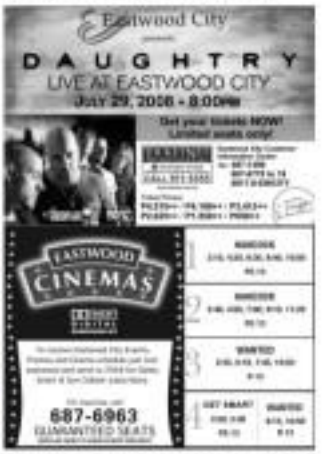
If this has become the standard Lettermen act, then it was something that brought untold happiness to a lot of people at the Big Dome concert. We realized, too, that there will always be an older crowd going ballet steps to time-eased lush re-their youth.

Next: Perals

Promoter Noven de Guia, whose Ovation Productions has been at it for more than 20 years, has predictably announced this next. During intermission at Thursday's gig, De Guia was already playing the promo video for his next show: Perals Clash.

But maybe De Guia should think twice about bringing back the Opticis who, despite putting up a Herculean effort, kept falling his-faces, never forgetting the lyrics. Besides, Opticis old group, Spiral Staircase, has long disbanded.





GIRLS ALOUD! Happy to be with the Philippine contingent includes Monster Jimenez, Marie Corrales, Raymond Lee, Michelle Moreno, Jon Librán, Martin Macalintal, Mes Jardin, Ate Bautista, Nicolas Pichay.

Red-letter days in Paris

Good turnout noted for first 2 Pinoy films shown in int'l festival

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

PARIS—SEE IS THE COLOR OF heightened creativity at the 6th Paris Cinema International Film Festival, where over 47 Filipino films are currently being screened in a special showcase.

The MK2 Bibliothèque Italie (Cinema) 13, where Gyeonsiwa winner "Big Time" was shown on Wednesday, has walls and huge, comfy seats all in bright red.

Red is also the color of the brochure of the Philippine showcase prepared by the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP).

Passion

After all, red is the universal color code for passion.

Marie Corrales, who co-directed "Big Time" with Monster Jimenez, said the mixed crowd that gathered at Salle 11: "We made this film three years ago... when young filmmakers were finding their voice in the country's movie industry."

He summed up "Big Time" as a product of pure, unhindered "joy" among the cast and crew.

Turnout

Jeremy Segay, festival consultant, told Inquirer Entertainment he was surprised at the good audience turnout for "Big Time."

"People were laughing, enjoying it, and the 126-seater Salle 11 was almost full," he noted. "I didn't expect the theater to be packed because 'Big Time' was only the second screening for that day."

Earlier that same afternoon, director Jeffrey "Jeng Pagdalagan" in Maximo Oliveros' was the first Philippine movie shown at the fest.

The good showing of "Big Time" was unexpected, Segay explained, because "the film and the directors are not yet that well-known in France. But it seems the French are curious to watch Filipino movies."

He described the Paris Cinema crowd as "different."

Inquirer Entertainment observed that the "Big Time" audience consisted of young and old, retirees and students, male and female.

MK2 Bibliothèque, which also houses the national library, is "a very popular venue" said Segay.

Affordable

Moreover, a ticket to the Paris Cinema festival is quite affordable, he pointed out.

"For only 2.5 euros," Segay added, "a viewer can watch as many films as he wants. The low ticket price allows people to take risks and watch films they've never heard of. They can dare to sample new, unfamiliar viewing fare."

Email: bayanisandiego@yahoo.com

RP team after location, co-production deals

PARIS—MARKETING THE PHILIPPINES as a safe, cost-efficient and viable location for international movie productions is one of the primary tasks of the Philippine contingent to the 6th Paris Cinema International Film Festival, ongoing until July 13.

On Wednesday, the RP team hit the ground running, meeting with European producers at the MK2 Bibliothèque. Inquirer Entertainment was an observer at the round-table discussion between the team and foreign filmmakers, spearheaded by Digna Santiago-Lesaca (director, Philippine Film Export Services Office or Pfeso), Boots Anson-Roa (head, Movie Workers' Welfare Foundation), Lali Serrano Ignacio (line director, Film Development Council of the Philippines or FDCP), Mairet Dayrit (of the production house Sunflower and an FDCP technical adviser) and Monic Macalintal (audio-visual attaché, French Embassy in Manila).

Among the foreign producers and filmmakers were Ornicka Lagrapa and Bertrand Sie, Philippe Gardel, Philippe Ilevati, Margarita Manzak, Jacqueline Lafont, Philippe Chatelin, Natalie Dano and Alexander Wisnivsk-Lenz.

Magellan remix

Director Sie and producer Lagrapa expressed interest in doing a film on Ferdinand Magellan, who died in a battle with Cebuano chieftain Lapu-Lapu. Dayrit suggested Cebu and nearby provinces as possible sites. She pointed out that Bigfoot Productions, a US group, operates a filmmaking school, soundstage and post-production house in Cebu.

Gardel and Ilevati of Phoenix Films, planning a fantasy or science-fiction flick to be shot in the Philippines, said they were looking for old villages, ghost towns and barren desert-like areas. Dayrit told them that all these requirements could be met.

The Philippine contingent presented a handbook that highlighted the country's selling points: 1) a variety of locations, 2) world-class talents, 3) cutting-edge technology and 4) competitive filming costs.

One-stop shop

Santiago reiterated that Pfeso is "mandated [by the government] as a one-stop shop [tasked] to facilitate the entry and production of foreign film producers in the country." She pointed out that the Philippines has entered as location to different foreign movie and TV productions from as early as 1966 ("Grey de Gerak, "The Vampire People") to as recent as 2007 (Arvin Hong Kwan's "I Come With the Rain").

Nepal: Roots Himalaya Hindi Gippsbilt Ajeya'apin Now," shot in 1979 in Laguna, other celebrated movies that filmed in the Philippines include Oscar-winning actor Ricky like Warrior (1986) and "Born on the Fourth of July" (1989)," Santiago recounted.

The handbook lists names and addresses of local production companies that could service the needs of foreign productions. "The country has the hardware (technical expertise) and the software (human resources)," Santiago said.

But Library, whose film "Friday" is in competition, requested a librarian-booked discussion between Filipino indie filmmakers and European producers. On the same day, a co-production seminar was held at the MK2 Bibliothèque.

Library said a bilateral treaty could help smoothen out possible kinks when a local producer teams up with a European partner.

(Bayani San Diego Jr.)

AT A FESTIVAL RECEPTION. Film Development Council of the Philippines chair, Rolando "Jacky" Antonio, Paris Cinema President, Charlotte Rampling and Mountford host Boots Anson-Roa.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Oscar shot for Ledger's 'Joker'

LOS ANGELES — Heath Nicholson's Joker was a blast. Heath Ledger's Joker is so dark and sardonic a figure we hardly see Batsuit McMurphy in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," the role that brought Nicholson his first Academy Award.

Ledger's portrayal of the Batman role "The Dark Knight" is so watchable that next year, 22, the first-year anniversary of his death, he could become just the second actor in Oscar history to earn a posthumous nomination.

"Heath has created an iconic villain that will stand for the ages, and ... I would love to see him get an award," said Christian Bale, who reprises his "Batman Begins" role as the tormented crime fighter. AP

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METRO EAST

1 ALONE
GET SMART
2 HANCOCK
3 MY MONSTER MOM
4 HANCOCK
6 WANTED
7 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
8 KUNG FU PANDA

NOVALICHES

1 WANTED
2 HANCOCK
3 ALONE
4 MY MONSTER MOM

PIONEER

1 WANTED
2 HANCOCK
3 MY MONSTER MOM
4 WANTED / ALONE

STA. ROSA

1 WANTED
2 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
3 HANCOCK
4 MY MONSTER MOM

LIPA

1 HANCOCK
2 THE HAPPENING
3 MY MONSTER MOM
4 WANTED

DASMARIÑAS

1 SERBIS
2 MY MONSTER MOM
3 HANCOCK
4 WANTED

IMUS

1 MY MONSTER MOM
2 HANCOCK
3 WANTED
4 SERBIS

ANGELES

1 HANCOCK
2 WANTED
3 MY MONSTER MOM
4 THE HAPPENING

STARMILLS

1 THE HAPPENING
2 PSYKOLOGY
3 MY MONSTER MOM
4 SERBIS
5 HANCOCK
6 WANTED

BACOLOD

1 HANCOCK
2 WANTED
3 SEX AND THE CITY
4 MY MONSTER MOM
5 THE HAPPENING
6 FAUPAWAN

ILOILO

1 HANCOCK
2 MY MONSTER MOM
3 ALTERED
4 WANTED
5 GET SMART
6 THE INCREDIBLE HULK

'Date' rate just a little lower than movie rate

By the Entertainment Staff

Hunky Actor has reduced his asking price to P2,500 for a "date" with guys and mommies.

Honestly, that's just P500 less than RPC actual fee(s) for its movies.

Meanwhile, remember this Product of a Talent Search who made a big fuss about turning down an indecent proposal from a gay man in the past?

Now, PTS has succumbed to the trade. And true to his new orientation, he's even top-billing a gay-theme film.

Troubled Teen

The Indie Actor showed much promise in the onset of his career.

Now, he is a "distant" veering to hyperia. After being discussed by relatives, he moved to a cramped dwelling and is often seen in the company of older gay prostitutes at night.

Trouble is, there are two conflicting reports on his bedroom manners.

One report claims (A cathartic for headaches), making them part with cash even if the act isn't consummated, another report is that he is a lazy partner.

National issue?

A Mobile Vet is considering why Star Cinema is hyping the purported burning issue between Sarah Geronimo and John Lloyd Cruz in "A Very Special Love."

Sarah is hesitant; John Lloyd is willing, of course.

MV scoffed: "As if it's a national issue ... don't overdo it!"

Separation anxiety

Controversial blitz was reportedly accompanied by a relative of her then Love Inducer(he got entangled in yet another headline-grabbing intrigue recently).

A source claims GI is practically living in with ML, which makes not only co-star who she considers her idol, but an increasing monetary support from her Old Man.

Another source says GI is still scrutinized about giving up the life of luxury she had gotten used to with ML.

Love that title!

"Byesa" is Sarah Geahlo new (for now) recording song on ABS-CBN. Yes she is in his second label, therefore, one that never fails to make her smile: "Sino ba naman ang hindi matutuwang tawagin ng Byesa?"

Their love story

Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo reveal the details of their much talked-about engagement in "Maria" (tonight, after the MMK).

Juday arrived in Pedi with Ryan and director Jerrie Men Isinita for the screening of "Maria" yesterday (Saturday). She revealed that she and Ryan are engaged and that there is no truth to the breakup rumor. "We had a family emergency," she said. Ryan also asked for Juday's hand in marriage from mom Carol. Her reaction? "My mom said it was about time ... that I need to plan my own life after pleasing my siblings how to long."

Weeks away

MOL Events—the godless Julia's decree

ACTOR Sasha Rarer-Colera ("Sarra"): ...ons as a New York prosti in the film, but he is cast to portray determine Sharlene Mateo as a pre-established comedy film. RAMA

...ners for twice may take a few more weeks to arrive.

Jo Alfred Serrano spoke at a short press conference Wednesday in Manila, where Julie is in a hospital. "I can't give you date," he told newsmen. "Let's say the birth will happen in the weeks to come."

The donor denied media reports that the whole ABS-Base of the hospital had emergency cots in the Julie Ehr clan. He said they had reserved just four rooms for them and their bodyguards. AP

Top of the tabloids

The top show biz stories in local tabloids this week. (And why we are amused. If we are amused.)

Punch & Judy show

•Jinkee Pau parts ang halusan ni Kris Aquino, pero ... (Ay, bakit?)

•Jinkee or marot raps, nagbreakay daw? Ang Al Al delim. Mas?! (Say it isn't true, please.)

•Rich si James, mapa-sosyal, nagbi-nday, nagkakalibitan! (Ang mga kapitbahay namin, nag-sell-up-yers, nagtatsismisan...)

•Kaya raw hiwalayan na si mhejoonet at Robi, James ayaw magpa-sosyal. Say nyo? (...or nagtitipid.)

•Dayuni galit na galit pa rin kay Ai Ai! (Di siya pansin magpiti kay Kris.)

•Si Ainohong lang ni sweety, first ex-sirera na! (Aba, mahirap makabig, ha?)

Regine's cake, Ruffa's Kang

•Regine Velasquez, umay na umay na sa kyeftism! (Bye'z what ... 365!)

•Regine nahe-nang mahalaman ya sa kasi ka-bati! (E ay Ruffa kpa, ano?)

•Kang pagkom-ales, cake-ales ...yan ang gusting Ruffa-in ngaun! —Regine (Hmm, parusa ba 'to.)

•Eugene Domingo, umaa-galaw si Regine! (Word of the week!)

•Si King Kong ang bagong "Idola" ni Ruffa Gutierrez! (Hindi raw sabi ni Annabelle.)

•Ruffa, frustration ni Annabelle Rama dahil kay King Kong! (Bakit?)

•Annabelle ka kay si Ruffa—Ruffa (Mother si King ano si King, Tatay?)

Rhian on a roll

•Rhian Ramos dynamo si Gina Pareñol! (Buti na lang wala na si Bianca.)

•Rhian, contro on contact nang walang kaaaway-away! Uhh, 'wag n'yo na sabihin.)

•Whitney, di tatoong MMK ang bio-pic-dras ng kanyang mga life ni Mayor Alcaraz! (Walang kabot na kami rito.)

Super scary

•Gretchen Barretto at Lani, super kinabahan! (Baka naman think ... check again.)

•Shark Ramirez binusted si Sarah Geronimo! (Wala bang ulam pabibuti?)

•Philip Salvador, nakonsensiya si Rudy Fernandez! (Dahil kasi sa kanya kaya nag-[illegible])

•Shalani Magdayao, bakit nadidiin ang ng Armando Al Adan? (Mali-mali ...LSY.)

•Mga sexy billboards ni Angel Locsin, kapit sa SIMEON? (Sana kbat ng billboard, Mang Rene.)

Dingdong's K

•John Lloyd Cruz, naiinis bkas na sa parodya ng Aabsweng gabbiland?! (We feel sobrahin.)

•Lovelife, inc-exper mania ang Aabsweng mamaw bago mag-asawa? (Exp-exper...)

•KerryBe, pumasok mahigpahalikan kay Christian Bautista! (Dun kay na-mute.)

•Rosette, ayaw pagsipot si Dingdong mag-hold! (A, ibang sargon na 'yon.)

Sisters, rivals

•Mang gumo kabali si Ate, ayo na-mang pagkamuhkin si Cristine! (Ehmean?)

•Si Ann ang bagong kasosy si Marian! (Expected na 'yon.)

•Angel, nanggaw nang si Marian ang number one? (Parang hindi yata.)

•Hindi ako natuigh kay Marian—Angel (Ehem?)

True or False

•Sunshine Dizon hindi crowing heroine?!

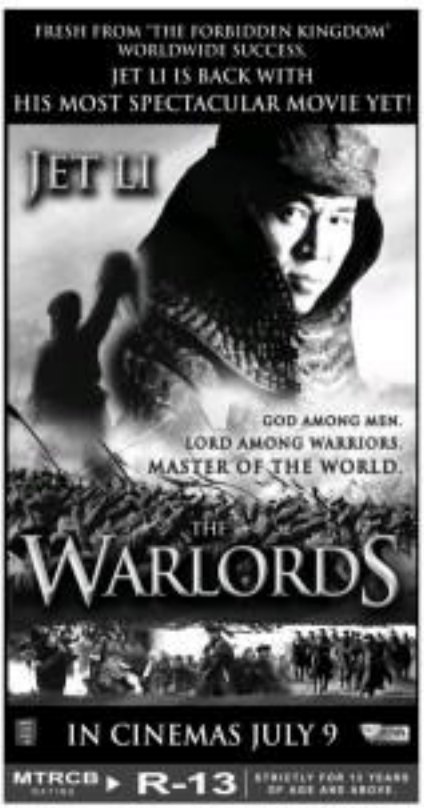
•Jennylyn Mercado, bubuang pipisi? (Ano kaya 'yun?)

•Angelica Panganiban, di pagsisisi ni Dingdong Dantes! (Ouch! si Ding-Ding mayo nag-B!)

•Bobby Padilla, pabidamovie sa sal-ent for ng small! (Di siraan naman.)

(Random, Random)

E-mail us: randomfm@inquirer.com.ph



Vicky's greatest fear for her kids: hunger

She hosts TV special on food security tonight

By Marinel R. Cruz

NEWSCASTER AND TV host Vicky Morales, who gave birth to twin boys three months ago, said her greatest fear was for her children to experience hunger.

"It's not like my family had overflowing wealth when I was a kid, but there was never a lack of food. More than I'm aware, was recently also in Antipolo on trip. Hearing about it always makes me sick to my stomach and breaks my heart," Vicky told Inquirer Entertainment.

Leon Miguel and Filippa Gan, born on March 6, were eagerly awaited by her, as Vicky and her husband, Filip Reyes, were married in June 2007.

Tonight, Vicky hosts "Kalam," a GMA 7 public affairs special on food security.

"Kalam," which airs on the SNBO member, takes a look at the issues surrounding hunger and food security in the country, and discusses the impact of the rice crisis elsewhere in the world. Co-hosts are Jiggy Manicad, Joe Taruc and actor Marky Cielo.

"I like doing special reports like this," said Vicky. "It's my way of giving back to the public. Most than the material things that we give others, we try to share them information. We hope to wake up the people who are supposed to do something about this current problem."

How does the current crisis affect your family?

Part of the reason we're experiencing food shortage is the fuel shortage. I have ride with my husband to work, in our pickup truck, which runs on diesel. We no longer use our fuel injection, whose full tank of gas costs almost P7,000.

How are the twins doing?

They're good. Their names are Leon Miguel and Filippa Gan. Leon has very good name; Filippa is Ella Mo. I name for uncle in Italy. My husband and I love Italy. We went there for our honeymoon.

Was your pregnancy difficult?

I had to inject medicine into my stomach. Initial, because I have a clot. Solved and go, especially when I had coverage. The injections didn't hurt. What I had a hard time dealing with were the bruise pains that came after delivery.

Did you crave anything when you were pregnant?

I ate a lot of fruits, she say registered my Mother! Mother! I loved mango, ate apple, banana and sweet watermelon. I wanted a lot in the first two months, but then didn't stop me from working. I used to bring my bags to the set of "Saksi."

Why didn't you just take a leave?

I didn't want to—me maternity leave ko sana yung sobb. I filed for maternity leave a week before I gave birth, and was back at work a week after. I was scared of postpartum depression. I was told there were more chances of experiencing it if I were to just sit at home.

As newly as mom, do you see any difference between the twins?

Yes. We've been a lot of magazine personals lately. I noticed that one boy is super shoot boy. He's mayaman sa bonus but in front of the camera he doesn't cry at all. The other one is shameboldy. He is always so well-behaved at home, but would just wail in front of the camera. Always turns on kanya whenever we have photo ops.

A "BALAK" regrow was filmed in Marky Cielo's Caribbean-theme premiere.

How is homeschooling tough on you?

My one child me that it would be that hard. It was so painful the first time. Mommy/Ipit ang tawag ko.

How is King? Parenting books say husbands sometimes feel neglected when the wife is fully focused on the babies.

I heard the same from my uncles: "Wag nang kakabuwisan ang unang asawa." So I always check on him, ask him how he is. King is home most of the time, checking on the babies whenever he can. I never row this side of him before. He was restless, always on the go.

How did you prepare for the baby?

I bought a bunch of books on pregnancy and babies. Reading them became my passion. I also sought advice from my moms and sisters.

My husband bought a lot of pleasing-ugly equipment. That became his hobby. He said he wanted to capture every milestone in our babies' lives. Yesterday alone, he took 300 pictures of the kids. Sang mom lang 'yan kasi sa sobb.

Because he any mom sila. I wanted a special kind of wallpaper but it wasn't available locally. So I called HP Pinoy Info for students who could work with me on it. I also had them paint clouds on the ceiling.

Email marinel@inquirer.com.ph

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 WANTED	2 HANCOCK	3 THE INCREDIBLE HULK	4 MY MONSTER MOM
GLORIETTA 4	1 MY MONSTER MOM	2 HANCOCK	3 HANCOCK	
	4 WANTED	5 THE INCREDIBLE HULK	6 WANTED	7 GET SMART
GREENBELT 1	1 WANTED	2 HANCOCK		
GREENBELT 3	1 WANTED	2 HANCOCK		
	3 WANTED	4 MADE OF HONOR	5 WANTED	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 HANCOCK	2 WANTED		
	3 THE INCREDIBLE HULK	4 HANCOCK	5 WANTED	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 HANCOCK	2 WANTED	3 GET SMART	4 MY MONSTER MOM
MARKET! MARKET!	1 HANCOCK	2 GET SMART		
	3 THE INCREDIBLE HULK	4 WANTED	5 MY MONSTER MOM	
TRINOMA	1 MY MONSTER MOM	2 GET SMART	3 THE INCREDIBLE HULK	4 WANTED
	5 WANTED	6 HANCOCK	7 HANCOCK	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta 1&2 / Ayala Center Cebu — BELLYFEST, June 28, Glorietta Activity Center

Greenbelt — SATURDAY JAZZ NIGHTS AT GREENBELT 1, June 27, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Alabang Town Center — Movie Star Hip Promo, June 13 – July 13, Watsons

Ayala Center Cebu — Big Brother Big Four Meet Fest, June 28, 4PM, Activity Center

Market! Market! — HBA Bazaars, June 26-29, Activity Center

Greenbelt — CHRISTMAS – The perfect spot for concerts, engagement & corporate events is now accepting bookings for 2008 to July 2009. For inquiries & bookings: p/c: call 757-1662 or 757-3021

Ayala Museum — Museum Visions of Heaven for Kids, ongoing until 28 June. For more information, please call 757-7117 to 21 local 28 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

Trinoma — MTV Upbeat, June 26-27, Trinoma Activity Center; Shamcey Supermodel Search, June 28-29, Trinoma Activity Center

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Brooke Shields reminisces about Manila visit in '83

LOS ANGELES—IN OUR recent press con with Brooke Shields for her TV drama series, "Lipstick Jungle," my wife Jenet asked the actress how she has dealt with fame, especially from the time she was former First Lady Imelda Marcos' special guest at the controversial 1983 Manila International Film Festival to the present.

"I've had so much fun cutting the ribbon at that festival so I was excited to come here today to celebrate a new chapter in my life," Brooke replied to Jenet, who interviewed her during the visit. Jenet remembers that she had to wait for Brooke, who was a high school student then, to finish her homework first in the hotel suite where "The Blue Lagoon" star was staying. "I don't get blase about it," Brooke added. "It's never recaptured those days [when] I used to still be here."

In "Lipstick Jungle," she stars with Lindsay Price in stunning Rosemarie Arrieta and Kim Hunter in the TV adaptation of the "Lipstick Jungle" novel by Candace Bushnell (who also wrote "Sex and the City") about three women living Manhattan's fast-paced, life-pink-of-their-careers but are struggling with various moral and personal issues.

"This is a very fickle business," continued Brooke who posed barefoot with her sister for a photo during that Manila interview. "You've got to have it you get chances. Sometimes the chances are few and far between. It's not always directly proportionate to talent. And it can be frustrating. I've been lucky to go from sundaes to machine, find my place in each and just really enjoy the ability to keep getting work. I work very hard."

Baby 'Schnabber'

"I was a baby 'Schnabber,'" Brooke screamed with a laugh about those family times when she was the world's most photographed middle or nine-model, sibling elbows with buddies other guests, which included Peter O'Toole, Sir Richard Attenborough, Franco Nero, Vittorio Gassman and Jeremy Irons. "It's very weird to say it about myself," Brooke said of being a "baby Schnabber."

Responding to my follow-up question on whether she kept photos from that era, Brooke said, "I just found those pictures. I have all of them."

"I was in awe," she admitted. "I just wanted to see the movie films and I found all these autographs that I've had. I think at my very core, I've always been a fan. Whether I was meeting the Charlie's Angels' [original TV] cast or I was attending that film festival, it was just so exciting to me. I've always appreciated talent and this industry. Whenever we have great stars in our episodes, it's exciting to actually work with them people and learn from them. I admire them. I have the same attitude toward stars that day when I was in the Philippines. I feel the same essence that I did then and do now."

Fifteen a colleague showed Brooke an Australian magazine with her on the cover from that era (1983); the actress reacted with, "In my oldest career, I'm starting to see my [oldest] daughter's face her expressions. I don't think I appreciated being on many covers as I do now."

"I sit at home alone, counting my covers like a crazy old movie star," Brooke joked to the journalists. She will sport her trademark long hair and those bushy eyebrows. Hiding the crow's feet around her eyes, she said, "I've earned those. If you compare my face to when I was 20, you're going to see more of those. Hopefully, they come from smiling." Of course, she said that someone with her winning grin.

'Most Beautiful Woman'

"I look back and think, my gosh, they were very attractive," she said of the movies. "I don't think I appreciated the magnitude of it then. It was probably a good thing. Because it would have been overwhelming to me. Only in hindsight am I able to see how large it was. I was more interested in my friends, going to school and that kind of thing."

When Brooke was asked how she felt having magazine headlines screaming "The Most Beautiful Woman in the World" during that time when she was only in her mid-teens, she maintained, "I just didn't read it. Because at 6:30 the next morning, I had to be at school and there he on the cheerleading team. I made it such a separate aspect of my life in order to maintain my sanity and friends. It was as if I just lit aside and didn't think or talk about it. It was epic."

Brooke, whose modeling career began as early as when she was 11 months old when she was photographed by no less than Francesco Scavullo for a print ad, has two daughters—Rowan, 5, and Grier, 2—with fine writer-producer husband, Chris Henchy. She recently published her first children's book, "Welcome to your World, Baby."

Brooke also wrote a memoir, "Down Come the Roses," in which she revealed how she suffered postpartum depression after going back to Broom. Tom Cruise criticized her for taking medication as treatment. In the ensuing controversy in which the public sided with Brooke, Tom ultimately offered apologies to Brooke which she graciously accepted.

Show biz passion

Would she allow her girls to enter show biz? Brooke, who has also appeared on Broadway and Nine Tony Awards in such musicals as "Grease," "Cabaret" and "Chicago," said, "I can't deny them something if they want it. If either one of them came to me and said, 'This is a passion of mine,' I would be interesting." She laughed as she remarked, "In my case, I started before I even knew it was a passion of mine. Luckily, it became that [a passion]."

"My prerequisite for them is an education," said Brooke, who took a break from Hollywood and studied at Princeton, majoring in French literature. "There will be no dropping out of school. There will be no professional children's school. That's where I will draw a hard line. But I can't be hypocritical and say 'Don't do this.' However, the hardship is no precedent so I hope that they wouldn't want to. Become actresses. It's a pretty rough life to endure."

Yet Shields, who manages Brooke's career from her birth until 1990 (her war with the actress to the Manila trip), came under fire for allowing her daughter to appear as a child prostitute in Louis Malle's controversial Pretty Baby. Her sexual witness, "Pretty Baby," is a fictionalized drama, produced in an island, who has a baby with Christopher Atkins, in "The Blue Lagoon", and as a model in the suggestive "You want to know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing—"jeans ads.

When a Japanese reporter took Brooke back once more to the past by asking about her date with Crown Prince Harahito, she answered, "It was an honor to meet him. I wasn't ready to meet him. I didn't know what was going to happen. I wasn't dressed properly for meeting my grand-back [prince] because it was more period. They never done incredibly loud pants that had the underground tracks of Canada or something."

Dating game

"It was definitely not something I would have worn had I known I was meeting the Crown Prince," she stated with a laugh. "So that was a bit of an issue. But he was very sweet. I remember how respectful he was and how his level of education was so impressive. He's become friends. I was so happy when he got married."

"I was in a very visible dating position," she described her situation then. "It didn't help that I was famous."

She revealed, "When I talked to the guys years later, I sort of asked, 'What was it like dating with you—why didn't you ask me out?' They thought either I was already dating someone or I would never say yes to someone like them. You're labeled as pushy if you go ask them out. It was a catch 22 situation. It's different now because technically, especially guys, are objectified to be more than beautiful. I have two daughters who I think are the most beautiful creatures in the world but I try not to tell them that every minute. I try to say instead, 'You're so smart. What great manners you have. What a strong girl you are.' I'm trying to instill in them something that can counteract what can be off-putting or intimidating."

The ones who did date ask her out include Andres Aguasa (they were once married and then separated after two years), Liam Neeson, Dean Cain and Christopher Atkins.

When I brought up how Lindsay as a young girl, was costumed as Brooke Shields for Halloween two years in a row, Brooke smiled and said, "Poor thing."

"It took Lindsay a while to tell me that she was not for Halloween a couple of times," she bared with a chuckle.

Comparisons

I also asked if Brooke was aware that Lindsay never got the talk about the birds and the bees because her parents just made her sit and watch "The Blue Lagoon." "Oh God, she needs some therapy then," Brooke quipped, still laughing. "If that's how she learned it, God bless her!"

Another antecedent involves Kim. "Kim and I went to grade school together," Brooke established. "We are both from New York. It was funny because we encountered some years later. We said to each other, 'Why don't we do a play in New York?' We'd be so happy if we're back working in New York. And then somehow in the universe, it all worked out. We found out that we were not only doing the same show but the show was going to be shot in New York."

As for the inevitable comparison of "Lipstick Jungle" to "Sex and the City," Brooke admitted, "We would be silly to want to stay away from that comparison. It's a wonderful prologue to come from. But we're a completely different breed. What Candace created was three different women in different places in their lives. The backdrop happens to be the same city. That's really where the comparison stops. We always feel that actual when we're compared but we really do feel that we're a completely separate break. If we could have a bit of that [Sex and the City's] success, we'll take it, thank you!"

E-mail the columnist at mrquake_1999@yahoo.com and read his blog "The Quake Report," on http://blogs.inquirer.net/mquake/report.

BROOKE Shields cuts the ribbon during the inauguration of the Manila Film Center in 1983. Also in photo are, the late Lucille Brodie (in bow tie), Peter O'Toole (back row, second from left), and Franco Nero (in Imelda Marcos' right).

The *perfect normal life*, according to *Gabby Concepcion*

By the Entertainment Staff
Photos by Jay Dizon Punsalan

IT CAME IN A GUISE THAT was the opposite of attractive and comfortable. But when he turned it, like an unknown species—or maybe it turned him—the normal life seemed to be the perfect order of things for Gabby Concepcion.

He found it in the United States more than 10 years ago, as soon as he overcame the feeling of being "uprooted" from his homeland (which, he also learned, was a terrible state to be in).

It was like being allowed to backtrack to that fork on the road where he decided to take the path to movie stardom. This time around, he took the other path: "I became a regular fan."

He kinda liked that; it was a "nothing" experience, he told buenas during a recent visit.

Yet, Gabby's back in the Philippines—it's hard not to notice—and back to that time path. But whatever happens from this point, he believes, is going to be good, if only because as fate he has also claimed upon previous jumpers-in, and on his—previous ex-observer.

Now, if he was only have a little more quiet: "I just want peace all around."

How's your homecoming, so far?

I love it. I can't have enough of the Philippines. After all, it's been what, 13 years? Ang daming nagbago. Ang laki ng nabili ko yung Makati kasi ibang-iba na ang skyline—more buildings, more billboards!

Did you recognize Edsa pagkililing sa?

Not immediately. Except for Guadalupe, because from the airport, nanggaling ako 'yun dahil pabalik-balik ako.

Did you notice KC's billboards on Edsa?

Yes, the first time was when I went to Baras in Rizal. My mom owns a school there, Jesus Missionary, sa Barangay Concepcion.

Barangay Concepcion? Kinuha ito 'yun?

Hindi, naghanap lang kami ng uncle ko. From the place lang napin-pointing, nakikita lang nasa malayuan, "Concepcion Elementary! Ang galing, ano?

How's your Indian property?

I sold it last year lang. Kasi hindi ko naman alam na aasa-alis ako e. Sa now I'm looking for another one.

Is your wife Genevieve ("Gabbie" Gonzalez) joining you here?

No, before I get too busy.

With your daughter?

Yes, she's coming with our daughter Samantha (6 months old).

How did Samantha's change your life?

Ever! 'yon talagang dumagi this and ditch. Hint nung dumating sha dat's, 'yon ung buong pake in my life. We were friends/love in Manila pero, we became better friends over there. I went there in '98 and found out she was in Canada in '99. Tapos kinipot siya ng Concord, about 45 minutes from San Francisco, where I was. Pinuntahan ko siya.

That time was your lowest point?

Well, to be exact, the lowest point was my second and third year there. Kasi, on my first year, it still felt like a vacation. Then, on my second year, I wondered, what exactly do I want to do here? Kahit naman nito ... being uprooted from the Philippines...

You felt uprooted?

Oo. So, after one year, nakot ko na 'adtan. As I said in one interview, nakita ko na ang Golden Gate Bridge, ang Golden Gate Park, Disneyland... After a while, magsasawa ka e. I ended up going to school because I realized I wasn't going home anytime soon.

What school did you go to?

Lincoln University, Portsmouth campus, Management Information Systems and International Business.

Why did you choose those courses?

Still sana the trend. Plus, I had a lot of time in my hands, so I took up international business.

Were your study choices useful?

Well, I never was real estate. Pero careful na rin in the sense that nanonood na ako ng mga applications sa real estate ung information system.

After school, you worked immediately?

Yes, as soon as I graduated. I worked in visual development and dealt with the fashion stores The Gap, Banana Republic and Old Navy.

What did you do, exactly?

I was a purchasing agent. I would buy na the merchandise but the orders—the flooring, lighting, the shelves that would hold the clothes, the cash register, the signs...

Where were you staying at the time?

Where I was studying, I bought a condominium. But I didn't have a job to maintain the mortgage. Gabbie made sure I was in school full time. I gave the down payment, she took care of the mortgage.

When did you get married?

In 2000. Understand that it was very significant for me.

At that time because alam kin nawa'i si Gabbie?

Yes. There was nothing there for her ... wala akong ipagmamalaki. She was really just there for me. Mahirapan sa America e. Di lago each other nanga-ay to the States, you know—new work, you study, you go home. Work, study, home. Walang party-party.

You seem to have lived a full normal life there, actually. Was your homecoming part of a big plan?

Well, I had long wanted to come home, to see dad, see the place again. Also there was no real chance. I felt like that was the end of the road for me. In America ka na sa talaga.

Parang ang lungkot naman, especially since you came from show biz ... used to being around people and having people around you.

Exactly. Ung parang ito dati, 180-degree turn talaga.

Certainly, before that, I had always wanted to go there. The first time, when we made the movie 'Pepe Go Wild,' 'pero ung pasta na 'yun. Ash-ko, ooby pala ri-to. I didn't know na fishball ako to '95.

Be careful what you wish for...

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Be careful what you wish for...

Oo, so. Five o'clock pa pag umaga ko na, tatlo pa ako ang Filipino. Then one day, I just realized I've really made a life there, graduated, got a good job, and then I passed the real estate tests. In 2003, I was a real estate agent na. Isa-isa-isahin ko 'yan. Life was good from then on. Gabi-lo, may life is here. Then my dad got sick nga. Ashi niya, 'Chri-lo ha?' If something happens to me, baka pagsabihan mo." Tapos nung namatay, I had just talked to Mommy Rose (Flamiranes, his new manager). Last year 'yun, in Hawaii.

'It's true what parents say: Study well, finish college, and then you can be sure you'll be going somewhere. I realized that in the US because that's exactly how it happened to me'

With Andy and Lorna, right?

Oo. Nagkausap na may dinalaw ako dati, 'pang Ambisyon ko si Mari's, si Michael San Luis. And there was a real estate fair. Pa'ng umaga naglakad-lakad ako sa Mommy Rose, ang sosi-lo ngang napuntahan e. Bully si Cesar, kasama niya. Mommy Rose looked at me and said, "Pwede ka pa. Kunin kita as Philippines Ignacio ang ng publicist," sha naman, OB lang.

Then she said, "Cesar, we makes ang daddy mo 'di ba?" Mandilat ang mata ko, sabi ko, "No!"

Whatever you thought of the Philippines, what was the strongest pull? Was it the prospect of being an actor again, or family?

Family always comes first. I told myself, I pea need na aunga everything that happens to me while I'm in the Philippines because it's for dad. I didn't want to get a call from someone in pagbalik ko at airport. I certainly didn't expect all this (movie and TV offers) was going to happen. The plan was, after I've seen my dad and done things that needed to be done, I'd be off. I had a timeline.

Time were going back to your orderly life.

Oo. Ang promise ko kasi kay Gie, as soon as I got a job, she wouldn't have to work anymore.

What does she do?

She worked with Marnie Elliott as events coordinator, and she's a friend. Ilalo, na legal assistant. When I graduated ngit in 2000, I got a job. Since pala 'yung umasade ng mga magulang mag-send, magtapos, at mag-pagsasalubong. Mangyari na kin 'yun.

But you finished college here, too.

Oo, at Shimbanchi, Advertising. Para ba 'yung excited we pag nandito ka eh. Ang dali ng assimilation ko when I got. Kasi, actual there's, because that was going to be my course. That was the time I worked with Gap, Old Navy... And then, in 2003, then-bumuwalk, I was working and studying for my real estate exam. When I passed, ruby-ruby na nga.

You started selling houses.

Houses, lots, single-family units ... up to two-family units. Residentials—I did not sell commercial real estate. I sold several properties, the most expensive costing $1.15 million. May mga $890,000, $900,000 ... all the way down to $100,000.

To Filipino buyers?

About 80 percent of my clients are Filipinos, yes. The rest are a mixture of Americans, Hispanics, African Americans, Indians. The Filipinos are very supportive. I did not experience 'yung "You're mistaken me" Ariana ang ito e." Pero, as long as you passed the board ... you have done exactly what. That's business and just anybody can handle that. Connections don't count there. Feeling pasosi naman ako, kasi I think I'm the first actor to ever do that. Maybe I'm the first actor from the Philippines who ever passed that California board exam and became a broker, too.

Did you want for yourself any of those houses that you sold?

Marami akong nagpapasabi, pero mga four, five million ang price. Mataas 'yun e. Those would be in San Francisco, Sandy, or Marin County ... the upper strata.

While there, did you make any friends from back home?

Well, si Basil Aragon ... and some others na rin nako-kuan na rin e.

You were doing shows occasionally in the US, right?

Yes, I did one in Las Vegas Saloon's, another in Alaska ... Those are small shows ... Chicago, Hawaii, New Jersey, LA...

Parang nagpapasyal naman 'yung mga 'agpo-

Reasons 'yon sa highlights ng buhay mo sa US?

Yes, para nasosoul pang ilang mga-gendang highlights, mga learning experience ito di'n. I met Filipinos who didn't know me, but they liked me. 'Yung dic nagpapahi. Kasi marami ako nabigang show tungkol do'n sa pagsagasa ko. They wanted me.

Did you have a good time in school? Feeling teenager ka ba?

Di. Alps kahlaan ko, para bagets. Pero si America dyunggo wala nomang kasi 'yun. Mhp mga fashion nemen ako na-ddot think me.

Pero nasaya?

Well, yes. Gusto ko pa nila akong presidente of the student' guild. Napaka-ako e.

Nasa old clay think you were?

I have no idea. That was never discussed. I had classmates who were bald, but they were only in their late 20s. May kanigaan do. I was really just a regular fan ... yes, that was fun.

Did you graduate with honors?

No, but I got a Dean's List certificate.

Would you say you took school seriously?

Ha, but you know, you really need to give it a hundred percent, like I did. Kasi nanood kasi ako papunta? Wala akong ibang pinapasa dito time.

Do you have pictures on campus?

Oyunyun wala nanong picture-taking dun e. Pero I was wearing, regular clothes—jeans, rubber shoes, jacket, T-shirt. Walang pagka-show biz na kotkungpao, nakakalbo, nakakamot-ap, apan ang bulot.

Alas! So now we know ... you used to wear makeup pala.

Kailangan e. Sa video they put make-up on me at MBS for the first time seriously, nandiyan nakapa-ako.

Did you green a beard in the US or any point?

Yes, I did. When I left Manila in '93, we had just finished shooting "Kahating Lang Uwa," where I had a beard. I shaved that, but grew another after a while. Lang bata pa ako! Tapos nagbibisikleta ako, nandalas sa Golden Gate Park. I bought a mountain bike in '95 and I still have it.

Did you say long hair?

Up to here. Umiyuta sa his shoulder), then 'yung bulok ko, parang si BC. Pa, nakakalungkot.

At around this time, I saw this magazine ... I wondered where the picture of myself with two girls came from. Ang headline, "Gone me alone," or something like that. I noticed the date, 2004 or 2005. Binulikan ko 'yung picture. Alpil pala ako; si KC I really thought it was me.

Kasi, remember, she didn't always dress like a girl. That was one of her early shots. Si pa siya nagpapa-ahit ng kilay. Bilis pang makeup. Kumalbo ako.

In your own words, what was it like, her rise two years ago? You hadn't seen her in quite a while.

I guess it was the right time. She called me. That's what happened. I was walking in the air; it was very cold that day. My phone rang; I answered, "Hello?" Ashi niya, "Hi, may I speak to Gabby Concepcion?"

How did she get your number?

Through a friend, she said. I didn't want have to ask who it was. Alam ko agad na siya 'yun. Deep inside, I knew she was gonna call me one of these days. Parang naka-program na sa akin. Ashi ko agad, "Is this my baby?" Ashi niya, "Hi, Dy!" Ashi ko, I forgot the cold. That was the most exciting moment of my life there.

Was it an emotional moment?

I was very emotional, teary-eyed, but it was a good feeling — 'yung parang naman ko na lamo. Ilaw 'yun sa Paris. ... I told her, you come here, I'll pay for your ticket. She said, "You don't have to do that, Pa."

Dumi niyong customers kids e.

Yeah, but I thought it was the least I could offer.

And when she arrived?

Exciting! Genevieve was taking the videos. Ako naman, nagtatago sa mga sasakyan chong tao para 'di siya ako-makasi. Habang papalapit sako ng papalapit nung gate-lo. Pa'ng malapit na ko, bigla akong nanakbo at kinuha nanovan niyong kamay-e. Kinuwan niya nung kaswitis. Tapos, nakita niya sha. Yung reaction niya, fighting, "Dy!" Habap-kanang gumagalaw, ung nung mouth. Jubby fighting, "Pa, we took so much alike!"

So what did you discover about KC?

That she was still the same; she just

grow up. Physically she was different but, inside, she was the same child I used to play with.

We saw a picture of her sitting on your lap, crying. We never got to ask her why.

She was just happy. We were having breakfast, and talking. Biglang lang siya sa lap ko—she was my baby after all, mama. If she was a big girl. Ang kulit-kulit niya ngo sabi niya e. Mamahiga pa ngo sabi sa akin niya. I would kiss her and hanchos, like she was 9 or 10. And I gave her my letter that I never sent. I wanted her to know I was thinking of her. I also showed her a note that she wrote to me when she was 3 or 4, Bata-bata. Ate pa ang sulat, sabi ko, "Thank you very much." Another note from her, I had it framed. Sabi da'n, "Papa I missed you when you were in LA." I showed her that, too.

Did you find that you had to control your self from being overly affectionate?

Both. I wanted to take it slower coz of my ususera. Everywhere we went, yakan. I brought her to the places I frequented—the Golden Gate Park, the Golden Gate Bridge itself. There is a place where you can see another view of the bridge. The fog kiss; just the top of it. Pulang Raymond's we went there...pero ang gender pa rin, ang gender ng feeling! I would go there alone before, to stay for five years. Dipon, biglang lumitaw ka sa KC. Parang wa. All my reasoning empty spaces because she was there with me. I wanted her to stay longer, but she had a shoot back home. So I said sige, hatid ko kayo sa'yo and we'll go to Graceland (Elvis Presley's house in Memphis, Tennessee).

Did you talk about boys?

Yes, I felt good that she even wanted to discuss the subject with me. But I cannot give you details. KC is very independent, but she is bit to absorb everything... She voiced a different point of view; not just from an uncle or a friend, but from her father. I told her, just be careful. You're younger than they are, they may have plans other than what you think... It was just, you know, general advice.

Of course you also had a lot of memories to share?

Oh, yeah. She remembers a lot. Sec only that I was in the movies, lumaki sa dyanye before; she remembers our times together. She told me, "Pa, everything I know about the ocean, I learned from you." She remembered when I made her carry an octopus. It was longer than she was, at 6 or 7 years old, maybe younger. Salawang sampung yan, hindi ko ng PJ's so isang buong magkaibo. She could never forget that. And I remembered she was a little, chubby-and cute girl.

When you saw her again, what was left of the cute, chubby girl?

Her smile, her being bubbly, full of energy.

Can we backtrack in time? "empty opinion" first meets "filled"?

Well, I was looking for... KC has a unique spot in my life. My greatest joy as his dad was bringing her to the places I loved... especially the beach. And I did that, whenever I got the chance. It was wonderful, dale ko yung sarak ko sa beach house, playing with her in the water, explaining things to her, "This is a coral... the ocean smashes the corals, and they become little bits and pieces so we have gravel... which, in time, are crushed further and become fine sand." She would ask, "Why... why... why?" Hanggang sa wa 'yun eh.

Tell us about that phone call that KC made so that you and Maxxxs could talk.

When she was there, we were always visiting relatives... I wanted her to meet all my siblings and her cousins. The day we were in my brother's house, I told her to give her mom a call, "Let her know you're safe." Nung nasa phone na ang mommy niya, biglang pinoy niya sa akin. Indi niya, "Ma, o, you talk to papa na."

What did Sharon say?

"Haha, 'pangarah nan!"

What did you say to Sharon?

I told her KC grew up to be a fine lady. I said, "I know you'd also that ... it's didn't think would do a good job. I'd have fought for her, taken her in a heartbeat." I meant that. Otherwise, I would have been there...

How you were your other children lately?

If Chino (with Jenny Seguisi), no. If Gabrielle (with Grace Bonsol) yes. There...here we are again, the right ones will come ... that day will happen.

Of course you'd like it to be different with your youngest daughter Samantha?

If we continue to live in the United States, things will really be different.

Mayo ibwatsikibe ba 'yun?

Mbirami ahong tayafana ca kabap ka... Hindi nangyari. When I was younger, ang gusto ko: maging pilosa. E, color blind ako, kaya hindi nemmy. Di-talak ito rin mag-drama. Pero ay sha lang, artista na ako. Kaya ni hindi ako makapasok sa classroom. Se lahes pa lang, may pila na 'on autographs.

Yung mga real estate clients mo sa US, have they seen your old movies?

Hahaha. Kaya nga cumunggal minsan 'yung pirmahan dahil nanonood mama kmi.

Here are you preparing Genevieve for a possibly new chapter in your life together?

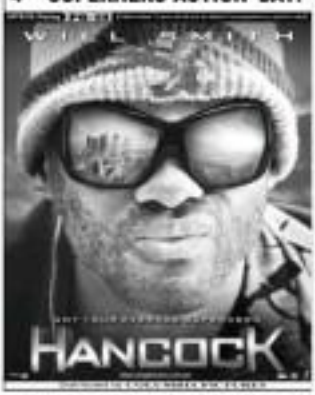
What's to stop about that is, I treasure up discussions.

Is that something new?

Dati, kung ano gusto ko, 'yun na. In the 80's, I learned to discuss, engage in conversation, talk about things. And I've found that it's a lot better that way. It should be useful especially now, later, where my life is an open book. There seems to be nothing that people don't know about me—maski 'yung mga id'lo-shes.

"WHEN KC came to visit, her first words to me were, 'Pa, we took so much cake!' I brought her to all my favorite places there, where I used to go alone. It felt like filling empty spaces in my heart."

4TH 'SUPERHERO ACTION' DAY!



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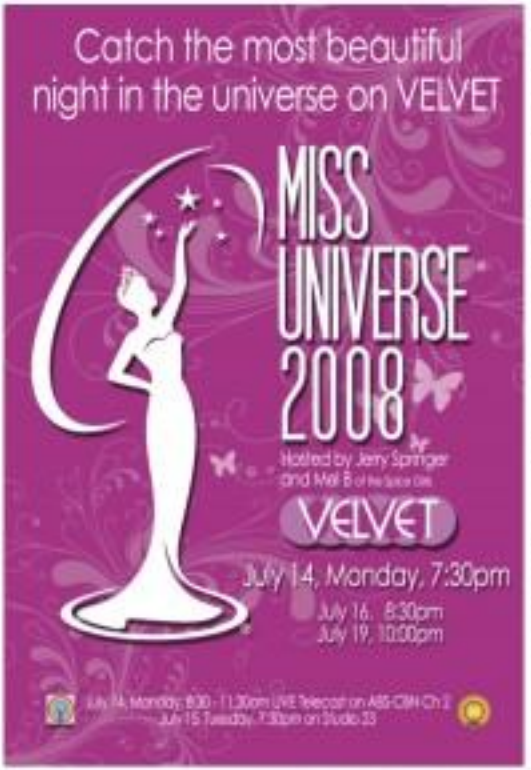
2 channels air Miss U tilt on same day

Velvet sets 2 beauty pageant weekends, featuring hit reality shows



THE TRIMPS MISS UNIVERSE PAGEANT, set at the Crown Convention Center in Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa, Vietnam on July 14, will be televised on Hallmark Channel live at 9 a.m., and at prime time, 7:30 p.m., on the Velvet channel.

Representing the Philippines in the competition is Jennifer Barrientos, up against 79 other contenders. The topless rounds are ongoing, and the final deviations will be based on three main aspects—best in swimsuit, best in evening gown and interviews.

Barrientos, 22, is a 5-foot-8 model and church ministry youth leader who aims to work as "welcome ambassador" for the Star World Hotel in Macao.

Emcees for this year's pageant are TV host Jerry Springer and Spice Girl Melanie Brown.

Last year, Japan's Riyo Mori was in Mexico City and crowned across the globe as an advocate for HIV/AIDS education, research and legislation. Mori was also in the cast of the reality show, "Pageant Place," which currently airs on Velvet Fridays at 8 p.m.

The Miss Universe pageant started as a local "bathing beauty" competition led by Catalina Swimwear in California. It has since evolved into a game that addresses opportunities for role models to get active in various advocacies.

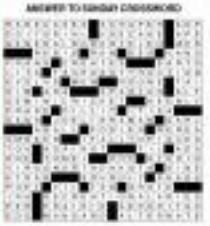
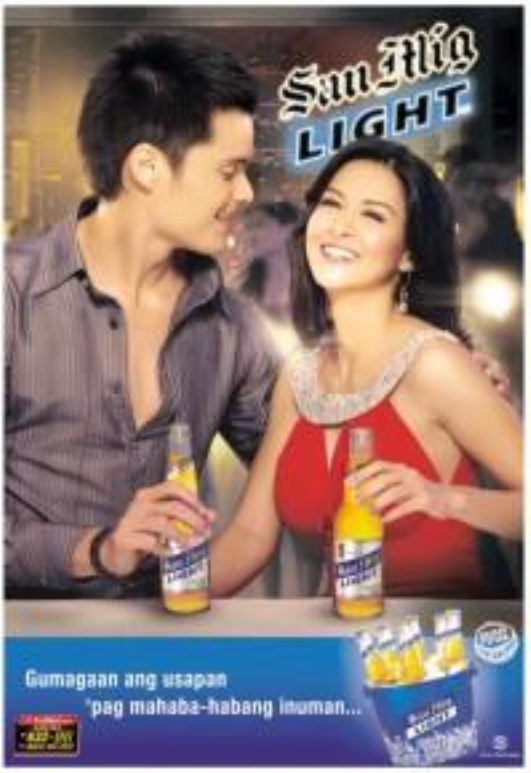
Among those advocacies is increasing

BEGINNING Miss Universe is Japan's Riyo Mori. She crowned across the globe as an advocate for HIV/AIDS education, research and legislation. She is also in the cast of the reality show "Pageant Place."

HIV/AIDS awareness by focusing on women's health and reproductive issues and including relationship tips with contraceptive organization laws.

Velvet also airs a full-season marathon of "The Pageant Place" on July 13, starting at 1 p.m. And on July 21 at 7:30 p.m., the new reality show where mothers and their daughters experience all the drama behind joining a beauty pageant will be announced as, "Crossed - The Mother of All Pageants."

Miss Universe pageant replays are set on July 16, 8 p.m. and July 19, 10 p.m. on Hallmark; and July 16, 8:30 p.m. and July 19, 10 p.m. on Velvet.

Velvet is available on SkyCable Plus+ast, SkyCable Gold, SkyCable Silver and other quality cable operators.

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